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President Barack Obama on Tuesday will award the Medal of Honor to overlooked soldiers from World War II, Korea and Vietnam, including these living Vietnam veterans. From left, Spc. Santiago J. Erevia, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile); Sgt. 1st Class Jose Rodela and Staff Sgt. Melvin Morris, both with the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne).

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE WHITE HOUSE/The Washington Post

Finally, their valor is validated

On Tuesday, 24 Hispanic, Jewish and black men who had been denied the nation's highest commendation for combat valor will receive long-overdue recognition

BY CHRIS CARROLL
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON

Spc. Santiago J. Erevia had orders to tend the wounded while the rest of the platoon pressed on attacking. But when he and the men under his care came under fire from four nearby Viet Cong bunkers on May 21, 1969, Erevia didn't dive for cover.

Instead, he gathered up spare weapons and ran into a storm of bullets.

He knocked out one bunker after another with hand grenades as gunners in the others fired on him. Out of grenades and with one bunker still active, he took an M-16 in each hand and charged, shooting down the last defender at point-blank range.

"Having single-handedly destroyed four enemy bunkers and their occupants, Specialist Fourth Class Erevia then returned to the soldiers charged to his care and resumed treating their injuries," reads Erevia's citation for the Distinguished Service Cross he was later awarded.

SEE VALOR ON PAGE 5

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"If the judge determines he was a good soldier who served his country well other than his inability to control his zipper, then the judge might cut him a break."

— Retired Maj. Gen. Walt Huffman, discussing the possible sentence of Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Sinclair, who has admitted to having improper relationships with three subordinate officers

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Science & Medicine

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MILITARY

SEALs take over hijacked tanker

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — A team of U.S. Navy SEALs seized control early Monday of a commercial tanker that was hijacked in the Mediterranean earlier this month by a small group of armed Libyan men, the Defense Department said.

The SEALs, acting under an order from President Barack Obama, embarked on the USS Roosevelt, which is deployed to the Mediterranean as part of the George H.W. Bush Carrier Strike Group.

"No one was hurt tonight when U.S. forces, at the request of both the Libyan and Cypriot governments, boarded and took control of the commercial tanker Morning Glory, a stateless vessel seized earlier this month by three armed Libyans," DOD spokesman Rear Adm. John Kirby said in a news release.

A Defense Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the two-hour operation resulted in the arrest of three Libyans and the discovery of two AK-47s on board. No shots were fired during the action, he said.

The boarding operation was conducted about 3 a.m. Central European Time in international waters southeast of Cyprus. The SEALs, who are based out of Stuttgart, Germany, are attached to Special Operations Command Europe.

The USS Roosevelt provided helicopter support and served as a command and control and support platform for the other members of the force assigned to conduct the mission, Kirby said.

The Morning Glory is carrying oil owned by the Libyan government National Oil Company. The ship and its cargo were illicitly obtained from the Libyan port of As-Sidr.

The Morning Glory is bound for Libya along with a team of sailors from the USS Stout. The sailors will supervise the transit, Kirby said.

The defense official said it would take about four days for the tanker, which was seized about 15 nautical miles southeast of Cyprus, to return to Libyan waters. About 25 members of the Stout's crew were on board to provide security, navigation and communications.

Libya has been in a state of political chaos since the NATO-

backed overthrow three years ago of former dictator Moammar Gadhafi, with armed gangs ruling vast stretches of the desert nation. Oil exports — the pillar of the country's economy — plummeted after separatist militias in eastern Libya seized key oil-exporting ports and other facilities.

Separatist leaders are now seeking to keep export earnings for themselves by bypassing the impotent central government in Tripoli and selling the eastern region's oil directly to foreign markets.

Libya's ineffectual prime minister, Ali Zeidan, was ousted earlier this month when he failed to prevent the Morning Glory from sailing away after it was loaded with the region's oil. Zeidan, himself accused of corruption, fled to Europe after a parliamentary vote of no confidence.

On March 9, U.S. officials warned that any attempt to sell the stolen oil aboard the Morning Glory would amount to theft from the Libyan National Oil Company and its joint venture partners, which include U.S. companies in the Waha consortium.

"Any oil sales without authorization from these parties places

purchasers at risk of exposure to civil liability, penalties and other possible sanctions in multiple jurisdictions," State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said.

The Morning Glory was flagged in North Korea but later de-registered by Pyongyang in connection with the incident, various media have reported.

The USS Roosevelt is homeported in Mayport, Fla., and the USS Stout is homeported in Norfolk, Va.

The Bush Carrier Strike Group and its 6,000 sailors departed Norfolk, Va., last month on what is only the carrier's second deployment. Four ships and eight aircraft squadrons are accompanying the Bush to the U.S. 6th Fleet and 5th Fleet areas of responsibility as part of the carrier strike group.

The USS George H.W. Bush will remain in the Mediterranean Sea for several days longer than planned as part of a U.S. effort to reassure allies on edge over Russia's incursion into Ukraine's Crimean region, the DOD said last week.

Stripes reporter Chris Carroll contributed to this report. vandiver.john@stripes.com carroll.chris@stripes.com

US vets welcomed at paralympics in Russia

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

A record contingent of U.S. servicemembers and veterans got a warm reception from their Russian hosts at the Winter Paralympics despite saber-rattling by politicians over the Ukraine.

The closing ceremony was held Sunday in Sochi, Russia, just as the Crimea was deciding whether to split from Ukraine and join Russia — a move slammed as illegal by President Barack Obama but reportedly approved by 95 percent of Crimean voters.

News reports suggest that anti-American sentiment is high in Russia, but that wasn't reflected in the reception for the U.S. servicemembers and veterans at the games.

U.S. flag bearer and downhill ski racer Jon Lujan, a former Marine Corps sergeant, called the atmosphere in Sochi "awesome."

The Associated Press reported only "cheers and applause" for the U.S. sled hockey team when it defeated Russia to win the gold medal Saturday.

"The host country has been outstanding, and there are great volunteers," Lujan said. "I don't



Courtesy of Joe Kusumoto

Jon Lujan, a former Marine Corps sergeant, competes in the Paralympic Games' giant slalom on Saturday in Sochi, Russia.

think we have had any focus on the Ukraine."

Eighteen servicemembers and veterans competed at Sochi — up from the five veterans who participated at the 2010 games in Vancouver. One reason for the increase is a partnership by the U.S. Olympic Committee, the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs.

Lujan, 43, of Littleton, Colo., participated in

the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and was injured when a truck he was riding in rolled off a road near Nassariya. He suffered two ruptured discs and was left with paralysis in his lower legs after damage to his spine during surgery.

A keen skier before his injury, Lujan was introduced to ski racing when he attended the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, sponsored by the VA in 2007. This year's clinic, March 30-April 4 in Snowmass, Colo., will include about 400 disabled veterans.

"Ski racing is a big part of Lujan's life. "I train five days a week during winter and go to the gym seven days a week in summer," he said.

Lujan's Paralympics ended painfully with a crash that badly injured his knee. He'll require surgery to get back on the slopes but is eager to return to the sport he loves.

Lujan said the high number of servicemembers and veterans participating in the Paralympics is the result of attitude.

"I think it is a direct result of that and veterans having good work ethic, drive and determination," he said.

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MILITARY

Same-sex spouses thwarted by SOFAs

By NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

VICENZA, Italy — Same-sex marriage is legal in Japan, although homosexual relationships are widely accepted there.

Same-sex marriage is not legal in Germany, although a majority of Germans support it, opinion polls show.

Yet U.S. Forces Japan is providing spouses of gay and lesbian troops and Defense Department civilians with the same benefits and privileges as heterosexual couples, while the U.S. European Command does not provide such benefits for those seeking command sponsorship in Germany.

As the Defense Department works to extend full benefits to gay and lesbian families, the inconsistent policies among overseas commands are creating confusion and causing financial and emotional hardship for an unknown number of same-sex couples.

At issue are the status of forces agreements between the United States and host countries, military officials said. The agreements establish the rights and privileges of U.S. military personnel present in a host country, including criminal jurisdiction, tax and employment issues.

Among the most critical components for families is one that provides accompanying family members — dependents — exemp-

With host nations of US military bases varying on marriage legalities, benefits granted inconsistently

tions from passport and visa regulations, allowing them to remain continuously in country.

The SOFAs for the most part do not recognize same-sex spouses as “dependents,” military officials said. “We are working with our Department of State counterparts to help clarify how our host-nation partners interpret the definition of ‘dependent’ as pertaining to U.S. command-sponsored same-sex spouses with respect to our relevant Status of Forces Agreements,” Lt. Col. David Westover, a EUCOM spokesman, said in a statement.

Without Italy’s or Germany’s agreement to include same-sex spouses as dependents, EUCOM said, the command cannot offer command sponsorship and its benefits. That compels gay and lesbian families to stay in the U.S. or to pay their own airfare, moving costs and rent — without SOFA legal and visa protections that permit them to stay in country for more than 90 days.

“Families are being separated or will be separated come this summer — families with kids,” said Ashley Broadway, of the American Military Partner Association.

“This is happening to people of all ranks but especially lower enlisted who are afraid to speak up about this issue and ask to have their orders changed,” Broadway said. Some have sought help from military lawyers or inspectors general, she said, but to no avail. “No one seems to know what to do really,” she said.

Three European countries — the U.K., Spain and Austria — have agreed to allow dependent status for same-sex U.S. military spouses, Westover said in the statement.

The different responses among the countries and U.S. military commands responsible for providing sponsorship, and the opacity with which negotiations are conducted, are causing confusion all around. Officials at overseas commands that fall under EUCOM are not exception.

For instance, an Air Force technical sergeant’s civilian spouse was recently given a SOFA card, then asked to return it.

The woman received an email from a support squadron official at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, with the following message:

“It was informed that a SOFA card had been issued to you recently due to your command sponsorship status under your spouse. This was done by mistake since same-sex spouses are not authorized SOFA status in Germany yet. Unfortunately, we’ll need to invalidate your recently issued SOFA card. Can you please return it to the Passport Office?”

In October, officials at the Installation Management Command-Europe expressed uncertainty about the matter in an email that Broadway provided to Stars and Stripes. “Our earlier guidance was we could issue SOFA. Subsequently we were told to stand down,” the email said.

“At this point we remain on hold for any new actions,” the email continued. “We are monitoring this situation daily. We are getting various opinions from local [staff judge advocates].”

It’s not clear why the U.S. and Germany have not reached an agreement.

Germany has for years offered domestic partnerships for gay and lesbian couples, the same situation that exists in Austria. Italy has no national provisions recognizing same-sex marriage.

EUCOM declined to discuss the situation beyond issuing Westover’s statement, and officials at subordinate European com-

mands would not comment.

Discussions regarding SOFAs are typically diplomatically and militarily sensitive — the 1950s agreement between the U.S. and Italy remains classified — and, as is the case with same-sex marriage, politically charged.

U.S. commands in Asia have successfully resolved the issue, not always waiting for the relevant country to agree. In December, Japan, where same-sex marriage is not legal but homosexual relationships are not a political issue, agreed that the word “spouse” applied to anyone legally married to Defense Department personnel, U.S. Forces Japan officials said.

In Korea, the American command pushed ahead, apparently without an agreement, informing the Korean government in a letter in November that same-sex dependents of troops, civilian employees and contractors would get full benefits.

It is hoped that the ROK government will understand and respect the U.S. government’s decision,” a USFK statement said.

U.S. Forces Korea added a caveat: Although it would assist in A-3 visa applications for all dependents, whether the Korean government would issue the visas to same-sex spouses was “a decision of the Korean government,” the command said.

The issue is a remaining difficulty for military gays and lesbians, who have made remarkable gains after centuries of sexual orientation-based discrimination.

Until three years ago, when the so-called “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy was revoked, homosexual troops faced investigation and discharge from the military if their orientation became suspected.

In June, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down key parts of the Defense of Marriage Act, which had prohibited the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriage. The decision paved the way for Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to announce that the DOD would make the same benefits available to all military spouses, regardless of sexual orientation, as soon as possible.

The policy faced opposition in the U.S., where Texas, Indiana, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, Oklahoma, South Carolina and West Virginia defied the Pentagon, refusing for months to process ID cards for same-sex spouses of National Guard troops. All states had complied by December.

A number of countries have offered no opposition to treating U.S. military same-sex couples the same as heterosexual married couples.

Canada, Nepal, Australia, Laos and New Zealand have agreed to define same-sex spouses as dependents, said a Defense Department spokesman who declined to be identified because of the sensitivity of the issues.

Two countries — Bangladesh and Sri Lanka — have told U.S. officials that they will not allow command sponsorship of same-sex spouses, according to a DOD official’s email Broadway provided. In numerous countries in the Middle East, South Asia and Africa, where homosexuality is harshly criminalized, no such agreements are likely.

At least 10 nations in Europe, including France, Belgium, Portugal, Spain and most of Scandinavia, recognize same-sex marriage. The United Kingdom will do so later this year.

Stars and Stripes reporter John Vandiver contributed to this report.
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‘Families are being separated or will be separated come this summer — families with kids. ... No one seems to know what to do.’

Ashley Broadway
American Military Partner Association



ILLUSTRATION BY
BAY SCHILLING
Stars and Stripes

MILITARY

General pleads to lesser counts

Prosecutors drop sexual assault charges against Sinclair as part of deal

The Associated Press

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — An Army general who admitted to inappropriate relationships with three soldiers who had served under his command pleaded guilty Monday to a host of lesser charges as prosecutors dropped the most serious — sexual assault counts — as part of a deal.

The hearing at Fort Bragg caps the high-profile prosecution of Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Sinclair. It comes as the military continues to grapple with revelations of sex crimes in its ranks and political pressure to address the issue. A sentencing hearing for Sinclair — believed to be the highest-ranking U.S. military officer to face court-martial on sexual assault charges — could begin as soon as Monday.

Sinclair pleaded to the lesser charges in exchange for the Army dropping sexual assault charges and two other counts that might have required him to register as a sex offender.

Sinclair, 51, had been accused of forcing a female captain under his command to perform oral sex during a three-year extramarital affair. The Associated Press does not generally identify alleged victims of sexual assault.

Defense attorney Richard Scheff said Monday that Sinclair is admitting to his mistakes, but that the general is pleading guilty to behavior that likely would not be criminal in the civilian world.

Scheff said he expected Sinclair "to retire at a reduced rank and go home to his family." Scheff said he understands that the military needs to take a harder line against sexual assault but that there must be a balance. "It doesn't mean every complaint that's brought should go forward," he said.

The Army's case against Sinclair started to crumble as questions arose about whether his primary accuser had lied in a pretrial hearing. It was further thrown into jeopardy last week

when Judge Col. James Pohl said the military may have improperly pressed ahead with the trial to send a message about its determination to root out rape and other widespread misconduct.

Under the military code of justice, the decision was supposed to be decided solely on the evidence, not its broader political implications.

Ultimately, a judge will give Sinclair a sentence that can't exceed terms in the agreement struck between defense lawyers and military attorneys. The legal agreement is likely to require a punishment far less severe than the maximum penalties of 15 years in prison and dismissal from the Army.

Sinclair may face additional administrative penalties from the Army, which could force him to retire at reduced rank. That could cost Sinclair hundreds of thousands of dollars in pension benefits.

Retired Maj. Gen. Walt Huffman, a Texas Tech University law professor who previously served as the Army's top lawyer, said Sinclair could be busted back two ranks to lieutenant colonel because the affair at the heart of the case began before his most recent promotion.

"If the judge determines he was a good soldier who served his country well other than his inability to control his zipper, then the judge might cut him a break," Huffman said.

The married 27-year Army veteran pleaded guilty earlier this month to having improper relationships with three subordinate officers, including the female captain who accused him of assault. He also pleaded guilty to adultery, which is a crime in the military.

Under the plea deal reached over the weekend, Sinclair also admits to abusing a government credit card he used while traveling to visit his mistress.



JAMES ROBINSON, THE FAYETTEVILLE (N.C.) OBSERVER/AP

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Sinclair leaves the courthouse March 4 following a day of motions at Fort Bragg, N.C.



BRIAN STRYKER/Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

Lt. Col. Matthew Olson, right, assumes command of the 422nd Communications Squadron from Col. Charles Hamilton at RAF Croughton, England, on July 8. Both have now been relieved.

2 AF commanders sacked

By ADAM L. MATHIS

Stars and Stripes

RAF MILDENHALL, England — Two U.S. Air Force commanders in the 422nd Air Base Group at RAF Croughton, England, have been relieved over a loss of confidence in their abilities.

Col. Charles Hamilton, who commanded the base group since 2011, and Lt. Col. Matthew Olson, who commanded the 422nd Communications Squadron since July, were relieved of command on Thursday by the 501st Combat Support Wing commander after an investigation, officials said.

"It was less of confidence in the commanders' abilities to lead their units in the best interest of the Air Force," spokesman Capt. Brian Maguire said in an email. "This action was more about leadership style and organizational climate than a specific event."

Maguire said there was no connection between the two sackings

and that the two men were not under criminal investigation.

Col. Brian May will command the air group until a scheduled replacement arrives this summer, Maguire said. Maj. John Riestler will command the communications squadron, but no permanent replacement has been selected yet.

Col. Angela Cadwell, 501st commander, said in an email that her primary focus was the "health, welfare and organizational climate" in the wing. She did not elaborate.

Croughton provides communication and computer support to military assets throughout Europe. The base came under public scrutiny last year when it was reported that British Telecom would provide a telecommunication link between Croughton and a base in Djibouti connected with unmanned aerial vehicle operations.

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Japan tax hike takes effect in April

By ERIK SLAVIN
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Living in Japan is getting more expensive for U.S. servicemembers as retailers and others prepare to raise prices in anticipation of a 3 percent consumption tax increase starting April 1.

The tax increase, which will go toward balancing Japan's debt-ridden federal budget, will mean immediate price increases on train tickets, groceries and other daily purchases.

Consumer prices could rise even more if Japan's economic policies lead to the 2 percent price inflation target officials are seeking as a means to jump-start the country's stagnant economy.

The idea that Japan actually wants higher prices may perplex some servicemembers, since prices throughout the country are typically higher than in many of the most expensive cities in the United States.

For example, a six-pack of mass-market canned beer, which is subject to consumption and alcohol taxes, normally costs \$12 or more at a grocery store.

However, government officials want to end the persistent deflation that has stymied Japan's economic growth and prevented wages from rising since the 1990s.

It remains unclear how the tax increase will affect the cost-of-living adjustment Defense Department personnel stationed outside the U.S. mainland receive to make for higher prices.

A tax increase would presumably mean an increase, but if the

yen weakens, the COLA increase might get partly canceled out because of the added purchasing power the U.S. dollar would then command.

According to the Defense Travel Management Office, the COLA is also determined using data from an annual retail price survey and another survey conducted every three years that examines living patterns.

'People should think that a 3 percent tax increase will be subject to everything they buy.'

Shungo Koreeda
Daiva Institute of Research

Stars and Stripes. For example, real disposable income for a single worker earning 5 million yen (\$50,000) annually will drop about 69,500 yen (\$695), said Shungo Koreeda, a researcher at the Daiva Institute of Research.

Japanese with families will receive child allowances beginning this year to partially offset the drop in income, but Koreeda noted that most Defense Department personnel would not be eligible for Japanese tax breaks.

"People should think that a 3 percent tax increase will be subject to everything they buy," Ko-

reeda said.

Servicemembers who regularly ride trains will notice increases of 10 to 20 yen per ticket if they purchase them directly. Those using fare cards like Suica or Pasmo in the Tokyo area will see increases of only a few yen per trip.

Disneyland Tokyo, a popular attraction for base families, has announced a 100- to 200-yen price increase per ticket beginning in April.

Calculating prices is getting more complicated in some shops. Several supermarket chains have announced that they will switch to a U.S.-style system of labeling items with pretax prices, adding tax later at checkout.

A few have already made the switch. Many stores have prepared posters to notify customers if they are switching to pretax labeling, but non-Japanese readers probably haven't noticed. "There is no obligation to make the announcements in English, so it may raise some trouble" for DOD personnel, Koreeda said.

Miki Ohta, an economist at Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting, does not think the economy will suffer from the tax increase, though her company's forecast indicates that consumer spending is up now and will drop about 2.5 percent from April through June.

One positive sign is that multiple large companies have announced wage increases in advance of the tax increase, Ohta said. If smaller companies follow suit, it could negate some of the tax's negative effects, she said.

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MILITARY



JAVIER AMADOR/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Taking aim

U.S. Army Pvt. David Bryant mans his position behind his M249 machine gun on Forward Operating Base Muqar in Afghanistan on Thursday. The unit is deployed to Afghanistan as a Security Force Advise Assist Brigade to support Operation Enduring Freedom.

Stepmom details abuse of former soldier's daughter

The Associated Press

HONOLULU — The stepmother of a 5-year-old girl who prosecutors allege was beaten to death by her father testified Friday that she and the former Hawaii soldier abused the girl regularly and that they pulled her out of school so others wouldn't see the signs the abuse left on the child's body.

Dellilah Williams testified for the prosecution in the capital murder trial against Naeem Williams that they decided to pull the girl, Talia, out of elementary school because they worried that school officials would notice the abuse and have them arrested.

"She started having marks on her body," Dellilah Williams said, noting that she and Naeem Williams dressed the girl in clothes that covered the marks while the special-needs child was still enrolled in school then left her at home by herself after they pulled her from classes.

The testimony will satisfy

terms of a plea deal the stepmother made with prosecutors in which she acknowledged her role in killing the child as part of a pattern and practice of assault and torture. The agreement calls for a 20-year sentence.

Dellilah Williams said she and the father repeatedly cursed at Talia, called her names and hit her almost daily. She said the child slept on the floor of an empty bedroom and was denied food for two or three days at a time.

Naeem Williams could face the death penalty if convicted of murder in the July 16, 2005, death.

The stepmother said the day Talia died, the girl walked backward out of her bedroom, during a belt-beating from her father, with her hands in front of her saying things like "no daddy," and "can we stop now?"

Dellilah Williams said the girl and her father were out of her view when she heard the thump of what sounded like a body hitting the floor. She said she later

saw Talia on her back, with stiff arms. She told her husband to put water on her in the bathtub so that "maybe she'll snap out of it."

But Talia started wheezing and the stepmother told the father, "She's faking. Just leave her alone," Dellilah Williams said.

Her husband said to call 911, but she refused because she wanted to wait until her cousin could pick up their infant daughter, she said. They devised a story about Talia falling in the shower, she said.

Prosecutors say the couple waited two hours before calling 911. Talia was pronounced dead at a hospital.

Naeem Williams is expected to take the stand during the trial, his defense attorney, John Philipsborn, told jurors in his opening statement.

Philipsborn said his client was poorly equipped to take care of Talia and was married to a controlling, angry woman who took control of his finances and other daily tasks.

Valor: Soldiers from 3 wars to be honored for heroic sacrifices during combat

FROM FRONT PAGE

In a White House ceremony Tuesday, the United States will officially acknowledge that the selfless combat heroics of 24 soldiers, including Erevia, always merited more than the nation's second-highest medal for valor.

Obama will present the Medal of Honor to Erevia and two other living recipients — former non-commissioned officers Melvin Morris and Jose Rodela. He'll present it posthumously to another 21 soldiers killed in battle or who died before they could receive the distinction they had earned.

Because of the politics and prejudices of earlier decades, doubt has long lingered over whether Hispanic-Americans or Jewish-Americans had been given equal consideration with Anglo-Americans for the Medal of Honor.

So in the 2002 National Defense Authorization Act, Congress ordered the Army review the cases of all Jewish and Hispanic soldiers who had received the Distinguished Service Cross from World War II onward to see if their heroism actually merited the nation's highest award.

Army researchers combed through some 6,500 Distinguished Service Cross awards and zeroed in on 600 that went to soldiers who might be of either background. In the end, the Army singled out 19 Jewish and Hispanic soldiers who deserved the Medal of Honor, along with five soldiers of other backgrounds.

The action echoed an earlier review ordered in 1966, which

found seven black soldiers deserved the Medal of Honor for actions in World War II. Before that, there were no black recipients of the medal for that war.

'I will get the body'

Among the deserving soldiers found in the latest review was former Special Forces Staff Sgt. Melvin Morris, a black man who had been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for action on Sept. 17, 1969.

Morris was commanding a strike force in the Mekong Delta when he received word that the commander of another team had been killed near an enemy bunker.

"That body has to be recovered because we can't leave him behind," he said in an interview. "I made a decision right then, I will get the body."

He and two volunteers reached the fallen sergeant, and Morris said a brief prayer just as a burst of enemy fire wounded the other two men.

Morris helped evacuate them, and with two more men, brought back the body of his fallen comrade. But then he was forced to return a third time because he realized an important map case had fallen from the dead sergeant's pocket. On his third dash back into the danger zone, flinging grenades wildly, his luck ran out and he was shot three times—in the chest, right arm and left hand.

Despite his wounds, Morris—who'd ordered his men not to attempt to rescue him if he fell—fought his way back to his



Courtesy of the White House

During an attack in the Vietnam War, Staff Sgt. Felix M. Conde-Falcon destroyed four enemy bunkers and was targeting a fifth before he was shot down by the enemy.

strike force and was taken out by a medevac helicopter.

Fight to the finish

A number of the men who'll be honored Tuesday never made it out of the battles in which they distinguished themselves for bravery.

Staff Sgt. Felix M. Conde-Falcon was killed after mounting a devastating assault on a bunker complex on April 4, 1969. After assaulting and destroying several bunkers with grenades, he attacked a fourth bunker single-handedly with a machine gun, killing the enemy inside, accord-



Source unknown

In the Korean War, Pfc. Leonard Kravitz took over for a wounded machine gunner and shot down a column of advancing Chinese forces before he was killed by gunfire.

ing to his Distinguished Service Cross citation.

Out of ammo, he picked up an M-16 and zeroed in on a fifth. A few meters from his goal, he was shot and killed.

Fearless and deadly

Pfc. Leonard Kravitz sacrificed himself for his fellow soldiers during brutal fighting on the Korean peninsula on March 7, 1951.

After the machine gunner he was assigned to assist was wounded, Kravitz took over the job, "and poured devastating fire into the ranks of the onrushing assailants," the citation for his Distinguished

To hear more about the Medal of Honor recipients from the friends and family, go to:
stripes.com/govmohrelatives

guished Service Cross read.

That was his job. But then, as the tide of onrushing Chinese forces overwhelmed the American defenses, the order came to fall back. Kravitz, however, voluntarily stayed at his position and mowed down an entire column of enemy troops moving toward an American position.

His marksmanship allowed the Americans to escape, but his fearlessness in the face of attack ultimately cost him his life. When the Army retook the position, the Jewish machine gunner's body was found next to his gun.

More than six decades later, the Army and the nation are finally ready to affirm that Kravitz and the 23 other honorees Tuesday long ago proved themselves heroes of the highest caliber.

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NATION

Study to test 'chocolate' pills for heart health

It won't be nearly as much fun as eating candy bars, but a big study is being launched to see if pills containing the nutrients in dark chocolate can help prevent heart attacks and strokes.

The pills are so packed with nutrients that you'd have to eat countless candy bars to get the amount being tested in this study, which will enroll 18,000 men and women across the U.S.

The study will be the first large test of cocoa flavanols, which in previous smaller studies improved blood pressure, cholesterol, the body's use of insulin, artery health and other heart-related factors.

Campaign aims to save dog in Arizona mauling

PHOENIX — A dog that mauled a 4-year-old Phoenix boy has received thousands of pleas for mercy through a Facebook campaign ahead of a court hearing to decide his fate.

A municipal court judge could rule at a March 25 hearing on whether Mickey, a pit bull that bit Kevin Vicente in the face, should be euthanized. Kevin received injuries that will require months and possibly years of reconstructive surgeries, according to doctors.

Since the Feb. 20 attack, Mickey has become the object of a Facebook page that has gotten more than 40,000 likes and an online petition to spare his life.

Canada-Mexico flight makes emergency stop

A flight heading from Canada to Mexico with 181 passengers and six crewmembers aboard made an emergency medical landing Sunday in western Montana after encountering extreme turbulence that slightly injured two flight attendants.

Sunwing Airlines spokeswoman Janine Chapman said the Boeing 737 landed about 7:30 a.m. Sunday at Helena Regional Airport. Flight 559's passengers waited in the aircraft for more than five hours, then got onto a second plane and took off for Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, about 6:25 p.m. MDT, airport officials said.

Founder of anti-gay Kan. church in care facility

TOPEKA, Kan. — The Rev. Fred Phelps Sr., who founded a Kansas church that's widely known for its protests at military funerals and anti-gay sentiments, is in a care facility, according to a church spokesman.

Phelps is being cared for in a Shawnee County facility, Westboro Baptist Church spokesman Steve Drain said Sunday. Drain wouldn't identify the facility.

Members of the Westboro church, based in Topeka, frequently protest at funerals of soldiers with signs containing messages like "Thank God for dead soldiers" and "Thank God for 9/11," claiming the deaths are God's punishment for America's immorality and tolerance of homosexuality and abortion.

From The Associated Press



STEPHEN B. MORTON/AP

Will Banton, center, and Dylan Browne try to catch bubbles before the start of the St. Patrick's Day parade Monday in Savannah, Ga.

St. Pat's parades go on amid tension over gays

By MEGHAN BARR
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mayor Bill De Blasio was set to become the first mayor in decades to sit out New York City's traditional St. Patrick's Day parade over a dispute involving whether march participants can carry pro-gay signs. But Ireland's Prime Minister refused to be sidelined, saying he'll join the procession Monday in Manhattan because the holiday is about Irishness, not sexuality.

New York's Irish, their descendants and the Irish for a day planned to revel in the celebration of culture on Monday, but De

Blasio's decision to skip the parade underscores lingering political tensions over gay rights issues in the Northeast.

Boston Mayor Martin Walsh opted out of his city's parade on Sunday after talks broke down that would have allowed a gay veterans group to march. Parade organizers said they did not want the event to turn into a demonstration for a particular group, but Walsh said their plans prevented all Boston residents from participating fully.

Still, thousands of green-clad spectators came out to watch bagpipers and marchers in Boston, and organizers of a float intended

to promote diversity threw Mardi Gras-type beads to onlookers. A similar scene played out in downtown Philadelphia.

In Michigan, parades were Sunday held in Bay City and Detroit, and on Monday a St. Patrick's Day Parade was scheduled in Cleveland. Cities from Savannah, Ga., to Montreal also hosted festivities over the weekend, and throughout the world, landmarks were bathed in green floodlights.

Ireland's head of government, Enda Kenny, on Sunday became the first Irish prime minister to attend Boston's annual St. Patrick's Day breakfast.

CIA chief of operations for Iran was suspended

By KEN DILANIAN
Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The CIA's chief of Iran operations was placed on paid administrative leave and was sent home from agency headquarters after an internal investigation found he had created an abusive and hostile work environment that put a critical division in disarray, according to current and former officials.

Officers and analysts in the Iran operations division, which coordinates spying on Iran and its nuclear program, were informed at a meeting last week at CIA headquarters in Langley, Va., of the decision to suspend Jonathan Bank, a veteran officer and member of the senior intelligence service.

Three former officials said the Iran operations division was in open rebellion to Bank's management style, with several key employees demanding transfers.

"Iran is one of most important targets, and the place was not functioning," one of the former officials said.

In 2010, Bank was pulled out as CIA station chief in Islamabad after newspapers in Pakistan, India, England and elsewhere published his name in connection with a court case, and the agency said he had received death threats. U.S. officials believe Pakistan's intelligence service leaked the name in a dispute over CIA drone attacks in the country's tribal belt.

Bank, now 46, previously served at CIA stations in the Balkans, Moscow and Baghdad, former agency officials said. He also was a top assistant to James Pavitt, who from 1999 to 2004 headed the CIA's operations arm, now known as the National clandestine Service.

The former CIA officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a personnel matter.

Winter not yet done; more snow for parts of US

The Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Winter-weary motorists faced another treacherous commute Monday in parts of the Mid-Atlantic as snow and frigid weather blew in just days before the start of spring.

At least a few inches of snow was reported in the Washington area and parts of West Virginia, Pennsylvania and New Jersey by early Monday.

In Washington, crews worked overnight to clear snow, but transportation officials warned that roads were still dangerous. Heavy snow closed Reagan National Airport's runways, Dulles International Airport and BWI

were seeing many cancellations, but were open.

Forecasters urged drivers not to let their guard down and federal offices in the Washington area were closed for the day Monday.

In New Jersey, the heaviest snow was reported in the southern part of the state, where many schools were closed or delayed opening.

Patience was wearing thin for many.

"Never thought of March as being spring. But snow, yeah, I'm over snow," said Jackie Denham, who was at a grocery store in Alexandria, Va., on Sunday.

Rain and thunderstorms, some of which could be strong, were expected in the Southeast.



SUSAN WALSH/AP

Snow is plowed behind a jogger running on the Washington Monument grounds Monday in Washington.

UKRAINE UNREST

Crimea declares independence from Ukraine

Obama imposes sanctions on Russian officials, ousted Ukrainian president

By MARIA DANILOVA
The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — Crimea's declaration of independence Monday from Ukraine triggered the toughest Western sanctions against Russia since the Cold War — with Washington and the European Union retaliating with asset freezes and travel bans and U.S. President Barack Obama vowing to "increase the cost" if the Kremlin does not back down.

Ukraine's turmoil has become Europe's most severe security crisis in years, and tensions have been high since Russian troops seized control of Crimea, a strategic Black Sea peninsula that now has decided to merge with Russia. Russian troops are also massed near the border with Russian-speaking eastern Ukraine.

Ukraine's acting president raised tensions on the ground by calling for the activation of some 20,000 military reservists and volunteers across the country and for the mobilization of another 20,000 in the recently formed national guard.

In the Crimean capital of Simferopol, ethnic Russians applauded the Sunday referendum that overwhelmingly called for secession and for joining Russia. Masked men in body armor blocked access for most journalists to the parliament session that declared independence, but the city otherwise appeared to go about its business normally.

The U.S., the EU and Ukraine's new government do not recognize the referendum held Sunday in Crimea, which was called hastily as Ukraine's political crisis deepened with the ouster of pro-Russia President Viktor Yanukovich following months of protests and sporadic bloodshed. In addition

to calling the vote illegal, the Obama administration said there were "massive anomalies" in balloting that returned a 97 percent "yes" vote for joining Russia.

Obama warned that Russia could face more financial punishment.

"If Russia continues to interfere in Ukraine, we stand ready to impose further sanctions," Obama said.

Moscow considers the vote legitimate and Russian President Vladimir Putin was to address both houses of parliament Tuesday on the Crimean situation.

The Crimean referendum also could encourage rising pro-Russian sentiment in Ukraine's east and could lead to further divisions in this nation of 46 million.

A delegation of Crimean lawmakers was set to travel Moscow on Monday for negotiations on how to proceed. Russian lawmakers have suggested that formally annexing Crimea is almost certain — with one saying it could happen within days.

"We came back home to Mother Russia," said Nikolay Drozdchenko, a resident in Sevastopol, the key Crimean port where Russia leases a naval base from Ukraine. "We came back home; Russia is our home."

The Crimean parliament declared that all Ukrainian state property on the peninsula will be nationalized and will become the property of the Crimean Republic. Lawmakers also asked the United Nations and other nations to recognize it and began work on setting up a central bank with \$30 million in support from Russia.

The United States announced sanctions against seven Russian officials, including Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, close Putin ally Valentina Matvienko,



ANDREI UDOVICHENKO/AP

Ukrainian troops with white bands on their sleeves march past an unmarked Russian military vehicle Monday outside a Ukrainian military base in Perevalne, Crimea, Ukraine.

who is speaker of the upper house of parliament, and Vladimir Surkov, one of Putin's top ideological aides. The Treasury Department also targeted Yanukovich, Crimean leader Sergei Aksyonov and two other top figures.

The EU's foreign ministers slapped travel bans and asset freezes against 21 officials from Russia and Ukraine following the Crimea referendum. The ministers did not immediately release the names and nationalities of those targeted by the sanctions.

"We need to show solidarity with Ukraine, and therefore Russia leaves us no choice," Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski told reporters in Brussels before the vote. "The 'Anschluss' of Crimea cannot rest without a response from the international community."

He was referring to Nazi Germany's forceful annexation of

Austria.

Markets appeared to signal that the Western sanctions lacked punch — with bourses both in Russia and Europe rising sharply on relief that they won't hit trade of business ties.

"So far, the sanctions seem fairly toothless and much less severe than had been expected last week," said Kathleen Brooks, research director at Forex.com. "From the market's perspective, the biggest risk was that the referendum would trigger tough sanctions against Russia that could lead to another Cold War."

Moscow, meanwhile, called on Ukraine to become a federal state as a way of resolving the polarization between Ukraine's western regions — which favor closer ties with the 28-nation EU — and its eastern areas, which have long ties to Russia.

In a statement Monday, Russia's

Foreign Ministry urged Ukraine's parliament to call a constitutional assembly that could draft a new constitution to make the country federal, handing more power to its regions. It also said country should adopt a "neutral political and military status," a demand reflecting Moscow's concern about the prospect of Ukraine joining NATO and possibly integrating closer politically and economically with the EU.

Russia also is pushing for Russia to become Ukraine's state language.

In Kiev, Ukraine's new government dismissed Russia's proposal Monday as unacceptable, saying it "looks like an ultimatum."

The new government in Kiev was established after Yanukovich fled to Russia last month following three months of protests culminated in deadly clashes.

NATO, Ukrainian minister talk closer ties in wake of referendum

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — NATO will forge closer ties with Ukraine and will intensify efforts to help build up the country's military, the alliance's secretary general said Monday, a day after a controversial referendum in Crimea on secession.

NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen and Ukraine's acting foreign minister, Andriy Deschchytysya, discussed the referendum in which residents of the Crimean Peninsula voted overwhelmingly to join Russia.

The secretary-general reiterated the alliance's firm commitment to support Ukrainian sovereignty and independence, and the terri-

For the latest news of the Ukraine unrest, go to starsandstripes.com/go/ukraine



torial integrity and inviolability of Ukraine's frontiers," a NATO news release stated.

The two officials also discussed NATO's intent to boost cooperation with Ukraine, including "strengthening efforts to build the capacity of the Ukrainian military and more joint training and exercises."

Deschchytysya also said Ukraine would submit within days a request to NATO for unspecified technical equipment.

On Sunday, voters in the autonomous Crimea region elected to break off from Ukraine and to join Russia. What comes next is uncertain.

In a statement, NATO called the referendum "both illegal and illegitimate," saying it violated Ukraine's constitution and international law. "Allies do not recognize its results," the statement said. The alliance called on Russia to de-escalate the situation and to cease all military activities against Ukraine.

In response to the crisis along NATO's border, the alliance deployed E-3 AWACS reconnaissance aircraft to Poland and Romania to monitor the unfolding crisis in Ukraine.

The alliance also has beefed up its air policing mission in the Baltics as part of an effort to reassure allies in the region. Meanwhile, the U.S. has sent F-16 fighters to Poland and has dispatched the Navy's USS Truxtun, a guided-



PROVIDED BY NATO

Ukraine's acting minister of Foreign Affairs, Andriy Deschchytysya, left, and NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen shake hands during talks Monday in Brussels.

missile destroyer, into the Black Sea for training activities.

While the U.S. and Europe are moving to impose sanctions on Russia in connection with its in-

tervention in Crimea, no Western political leaders of consequence have called for a U.S. or NATO troop presence in Ukraine.

vandiver.john@starsandstripes.com

WORLD



JOSHUA PAUL/AP

A woman with her face painted to depict the flight of the missing Malaysian jet stands in front of the "Wall of hope" Monday at Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang, Malaysia.

Plane search grows from Australia to Kazakhstan

By IAN MADER

The Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — The search for the missing Malaysian jet pushed deep into the northern and southern hemispheres Monday as Australia scoured the southern Indian Ocean and Kazakhstan — more than 6,000 miles to the northwest — answered Malaysia's call for help in the unprecedented hunt.

French investigators arriving in Kuala Lumpur to lend expertise from the two-year search for an Air France jet that crashed into the Atlantic Ocean in 2009 said they were able to rely on distress signals. That vital tool is missing in the Malaysia Airlines mystery because flight 370's communications were deliberately severed ahead of its disappearance more than a week ago, investigators say.

"It's very different from the Air France case. The Malaysian situation is much more difficult," said Jean Paul Troadec, a special adviser to France's aviation accident investigation bureau.

Malaysian authorities say the jet carrying 239 people was intentionally diverted from its flight path during an overnight flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing

on March 8 and flew off-course for several hours. Suspicion has fallen on the pilots, although Malaysian officials have said they are looking into everyone aboard the flight.

Malaysian police confiscated a flight simulator from the pilot's home on Saturday and also visited the home of the co-pilot in what Malaysian police chief Khalid Abu Bakar initially said was the first police visits to those homes. But the government — which has come under criticism abroad for missteps and foot-dragging in their release of information — issued a statement Monday contradicting that account by saying police first visited the pilots' homes as early as March 9, the day after the flight.

Investigators haven't ruled out hijacking, sabotage, pilot suicide or mass murder, and they are checking the backgrounds of all 227 passengers and 12 crewmembers, as well as the ground crew, to see if links to terrorists, personal problems or psychological issues could be factors.

For now, Malaysian Defense Minister Hishammuddin Hussein said finding the plane was still the main focus, and he did not rule out finding it intact.

"The fact that there was no distress signal, no ransom notes, no parties claiming responsibility, there is always hope," Hishammuddin said at a news conference.

Malaysia Airlines CEO Ahmad Jauhari Yahya said an initial investigation indicated that the co-pilot, Fariq Abdul Hamid, spoke the flight's last words — "All right, good night" — to ground controllers.

Malaysian officials earlier said those words came after one of the jetliner's data communications systems — the Aircraft Communications Addressing and Reporting System — had been switched off, sharpening suspicion that one or both of the pilots may have been involved in the plane's disappearance.

However, Ahmad said Monday that while the last data transmission from ACARS — which gives plane performance and maintenance information — came before that, it was still unclear at what point the system was switched off. That opened the possibility that both ACARS and the plane's transponders — which make the plane visible to civilian air traffic controllers — were severed later and at about the same time.

Satellite data may be essential in hunt for missing airliner

By JOAN LOWY

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Finding the missing Malaysia Airlines plane may hinge on whether searchers can narrow down where they need to look using satellite data that is inexact and has never been used for that purpose before, search-and-rescue experts say.

Authorities now believe someone onboard the Boeing 777 shut down part of the aircraft's messaging system about the same time the plane with 239 people on board disappeared from civilian radar. But an Inmarsat satellite was able to automatically connect with a portion of the messaging system that remained in operation, similar to a phone call that just rings because no one is on the other end to pick it up and provide information. No location information was exchanged, but the satellite continued to identify the plane once per hour for four to five hours after it disappeared from radar screens.

Based on the hourly connec-

tions with the plane, described by a U.S. official as a "handshake," the satellite knows at what angle to tilt its antenna to be ready to receive a message from the plane should one be sent. Using that antenna angle, along with radar data, investigators have been able to draw two vast arcs, or "corridors" — a northern one from northern Thailand through to the border of the Central Asian countries Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, and a southern one from Indonesia to the southern Indian Ocean. The plane is believed to be somewhere along those arcs.

Air crash investigators have never used this kind of satellite data before to try to find a missing plane, but after pursuing other leads it's the best clue left.

"The people that are doing this are thinking outside the box. They're using something that wasn't designed to be used this way, and it seems to be working," said William Waldo, who teaches accident investigation at the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Arizona.

Long-simmering regional tensions emerge over probe

By WILLIAM WAN

AND SIMON DENVER

The Washington Post

BEIJING — The international hunt for the vanished Malaysia Airlines jet has been marked by mounting criticism about the pace of the investigation, whether information is being shared and whether Malaysian officials are reaching out to enough experts.

China has assailed Malaysia's handling of the probe. Vietnam at one point suspended its search after it thought Malaysia was holding back relevant radar information. Indian officials said Sunday that they would suspend their search-and-rescue effort while Malaysian officials determine where they should be looking.

Meanwhile, the number of countries involved in the search has grown from 14 to 25, adding further complexity to the sprawling effort.

The antagonism reflects, in part, long-simmering tensions in the region. A number of countries

involved in the search have been arguing in recent years over territories not far from where someone in the plane's cockpit last contacted air traffic control.

Six nations involved in the search have argued over islands and sea and air lanes in the South China Sea: China, Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Indonesia.

Just days ago, a dispute flared between China and the Philippines over a shoal in the South China Sea.

But the concerns about the search and investigation reflect more than long-standing tensions among Asian countries.

In Washington, officials said they were frustrated because they think the FBI could be of substantial assistance. A team of FBI agents is ready to go to Kuala Lumpur, but their assistance has not been requested by the Malaysian government, the officials said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of diplomatic sensitivities.

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WORLD



HUSSEIN MALLA/AP

Lebanese army soldiers from a commando unit walk from the remains of a bomb-packed vehicle they blew up outside the village of Fakiha, near the Lebanese and Syria border, in northeast Lebanon on Monday. The Lebanese army is searching for rebels crossing into the country.

Lebanon sends army to Syrian border

By HUSSEIN MALLA
AND BARBARA SUKK
The Associated Press

NABI OTHMAN, Lebanon — The Lebanese army sent commandos to the tense border area with Syria on Monday, bracing for another spillover of the conflict next door as Syrian rebels continued to flee into Lebanon after the fall of their stronghold to President Bashar Assad's forces.

Since Yabroud fell on Sunday, Lebanon has been on edge. Syrian rebels have been fleeing into the Lebanese Sunni-dominated town of Aarsal, which is surrounded by Shiite villages that are guarded by Hezbollah militants.

Lebanese troops, including commandos in beige, desert-style army uniforms, were seen patrolling the rugged, hilly border area on foot Monday, fingers on the

triggers of their automatic rifles.

On one patrol, near the northeastern village of Fakiha, Lebanese troops came across an abandoned vehicle and blew it up as a precaution, firing a rocket-propelled grenade that turned the SUV into a fireball and left a 4-yard crater on the ground.

"We took the decision to blow it up immediately, without searching it," an officer told The Associated Press at the scene, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with military regulations.

The fall of Yabroud — a frontier town and a strategic smuggling hub for the rebels trying to overthrow Assad — was a major gain for Syrian government troops and their Hezbollah allies.

It was also the Syrian opposition fighters' last stronghold in the vital border area. Assad's forces have now consolidated authority

in Syria's major cities, including the capital, Damascus.

Yabroud fell into Syrian government hands after months of fighting in the mountainous Qalamoun region between Assad's forces and Hezbollah fighters on one side and rebel groups, mostly Islamist militant groups, on the other.

The Hezbollah fighters have been instrumental to Assad's success on the battlefield, and support from the Iranian-backed fighters appears to have tipped the balance into the government's favor in Yabroud.

However, with opposition fighters fleeing into Lebanon, where Hezbollah is a major force, the conflict is likely to spill into Syria's smaller neighbor. The civil war already has ignited polarizing sectarian tensions between Lebanon's Sunnis and Shiites.

In the past weeks, Sunni mili-

itants have carried out several suicide bombings and car bomb attacks in the Shiite-dominated towns and suburbs of Beirut that are Hezbollah strongholds, claiming they were revenge for the Iranian-backed group's role inside Syria.

On Monday, a militant Sunni group claimed responsibility for a car bombing the previous night in Nabi Othman, a predominantly Shiite town in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley that also has a significant Christian community.

The Nusra Front in Lebanon said in a statement posted on its Twitter account that the attack, in which two people were killed and 14 were wounded, was in revenge for Hezbollah's support for Assad and "a quick response" for the fall of Yabroud into Syrian government hands.

US sends Iraq 100 Hellfire missiles

By SAMEER N. YACOB
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The United States delivered 100 Hellfire missiles, along with assault rifles and ammunition, to Iraq as part of its anti-terrorism assistance to the country, the U.S. Embassy in Iraq said on Sunday.

In a statement, it said the delivery was made earlier this month to help bolster Iraq forces fighting a breakaway al-Qaida group known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

"It is essential that Iraqi Security Forces are equipped with modern and effective weaponry given the serious threat... the ISIL now poses to Iraq and the region," said the statement, which also promised to send more weapons to Iraq in the coming weeks.

It added that since mid-January, Iraqi security forces had received more than 11 million rounds of ammunition, as well as thousands of machine guns, sniper rifles, assault rifles and grenades.

The Iraqi warplanes frequently fire Hellfire missiles at militant positions in the embattled western Anbar province.

Since late December, Iraq's western cities have seen fierce clashes pitting government security forces and their tribal Sunni militia allies against al-Qaida-linked militants and other insurgent groups. The insurgents hold the city of Fallujah and parts of Anbar's provincial capital, Ramadi.

Meanwhile, two police officials said a suicide bomber rammed his explosive-laden car into a joint security patrol near Ramadi Sunday afternoon, killing three policemen and two soldiers.

Magnitude-6.7 earthquake hits Chile's northern Pacific coast

The Associated Press

SANTIAGO, Chile — A strong magnitude-6.7 earthquake shook Chile's northern Pacific shore Sunday, and authorities said more than 100,000 people briefly evacuated some coastal areas as a precaution. Only minor damage

was reported.

The U.S. Geological Survey originally reported the quake at a magnitude 7.0 but later revised the reading down. The tremor struck offshore about 6:16 p.m. at a depth of 12½ miles. Its epicenter was 37 miles northwest of

Iquique, Chile.

A series of strong shocks followed in the ensuing hours, registering between magnitude 4.9 and 5.2, the USGS said.

Chile's navy said there had been a possibility of a minor tsunami between the northern towns

of Arica and Tocopilla, so authorities urged people to evacuate along a stretch of coast where the Arica and Parinacota region adjoins the Tarapaca region.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said there did not appear

to be a threat of a destructive Pacific-wide tsunami.

Franz Schmauck, Arica and Parinacota regional director of Chile's ONEMI emergency services office, told state TV that no damage was registered except for broken windows on some homes.

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man who pretended to be doctor gets 5 years

CA SAN DIEGO — A La Mesa, Calif., man Friday was sentenced to five years in prison after being convicted of practicing medicine without a license and promising to cure patients of AIDS, cancer and other maladies.

Desperate, terminally ill patients paid up to \$40,000 to Keith Barton, 52, for cures, prosecutors said.

A 60-year-old woman suffering from an autoimmune disease followed Barton's advice to have all her teeth extracted as part of an ineffective treatment called "dentritic cellular therapy," according to court documents.

"By posing as an M.D., providing fake cures and charging thousands of dollars, this defendant showed a callous regard for seriously ill people," District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis said.

Man dressed as 'Rambo' held on several charges

FL PALM COAST — A man described as being dressed like "Rambo" is sitting in a central Florida jail after entering a lounge with an assault rifle and two hunting knives and challenging customers. The man was restrained and rendered unconscious by patrons before police arrived.

Palm Coast resident Daniel Allen Noble, 37, was peacefully drinking at the Europa Lounge when he left and returned armed around 11:30 p.m. Saturday. Two customers engaged Noble and forced the barrel of the rifle toward the ground, where two shots were fired. Noble was able to cut the two men after being disarmed of the rifle, police alleged.

He is being held on charges of attempted murder, two counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and two counts of aggravated battery with a deadly weapon.

Toddler survives scrape on head by subway train

NY NEW YORK — Police said a 3-year-old boy survived a scrape with a New York City subway train after falling on the station platform.

The New York Post reported that the toddler was injured Friday night when he fell at the East Broadway station while waiting for the F train with his mother after his prekindergarten class. The arriving train scraped his head as it pulled into the station.

The boy's father, Danny Moy, told the newspaper that the cut was deep enough that he could see his child's skull.

Moy said a bystander who was a doctor helped care for the boy until the ambulance arrived. The toddler received 10 stitches in his head at Bellevue Hospital.

Theft of \$400K worth of pins an inside job

TX ARLINGTON — A sorority employee and a partner were arrested Wednesday

THE CENSUS

246

The length in feet of the next-generation Goodyear blimp unveiled Friday at the Akron, Ohio, hangar where it was assembled. The helium-filled airship is bigger, quicker and more maneuverable than earlier models, Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. said. It fits 12 passengers and has a semirigid skeleton, a feature that wasn't present in earlier models and raises questions about whether it is truly a blimp. It can travel at up to 73 mph and has custom, computer-controlled avionics. The cost of the blimp wasn't revealed.



Rockin' the green

Above: The Chicago River is dyed green ahead of the St. Patrick's Day parade in Chicago on Saturday.

Left: "Shamrock," an Irish wolfhound, participates in the parade.

PHOTOS BY PAUL BEATY/AP

day in the theft of an estimated \$400,000 worth of gold sorority pins from Delta Delta Delta's executive headquarters in Arlington.

About 2,000 stars-and-crescent pins decorated with precious or semiprecious stones were taken from the Tri-Delta office over a period of time, police spokeswoman Tiara Ellis Richard said.

Carla Rae Seals, 42, and Mark Jason Strofache, 41, were in the

Arlington jail facing felony theft charges. Bail was set at \$100,000 each.

Man gets 249 years for 1991 temple slayings

AZ PHOENIX — A man convicted of killing nine people, including six monks, during a robbery at a Buddhist temple in metro Phoenix was sentenced Friday to 249 years in

prison, marking the end of one of the most notorious criminal cases in Arizona over the past 25 years.

Johnathan A. Doody, 39, was found guilty in January of first-degree murder in the deaths of six monks, one nun and two helpers who were shot in the back of the head and placed face-down in a circle in August 1991 at the Wat Phnomkuanaram temple west of Phoenix.

Doody, who was 17 at the time

of the crimes, was one of two men convicted in the killings.

Alessandro "Alec" Garcia, a high school friend of Doody's, pleaded guilty and was previously sentenced to life in prison in exchange for his testimony and a promise that prosecutors wouldn't seek the death penalty.

Facebook photos lead to lemur taken at fair

OH OTTAWA — A prosecutor said Facebook photos tipped off police to the whereabouts of a lemur swiped from a fair in northwest Ohio.

Investigators said the photos showed a man at parties with the lemur on his shoulder.

Derek Mangas, 21, of Leipsi, was sentenced last week to 20 days in jail and a \$500 fine.

Prosecutors said the lemur was stolen from a petting zoo at the Putnam County Fair last June.

The Courier newspaper in Findlay reported that Mangas' attorney said alcohol contributed to his client's decisions.

The attorney also told a judge that Mangas did take care of the lemur. However, the lemur's owners said the animal has been more aggressive since they got it back and that they can't put it in the petting zoo.

Old barns beginning to disappear at high rate

KY LEXINGTON — Old barns are starting to disappear in Kentucky.

The state had more pre-1960 barns per square mile than any other state in 2007, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture census.

Now, Kentucky Heritage Council Director Craig Potts said the structures are "being lost at an alarming rate."

Potts told the Lexington Herald-Leader that many are tobacco barns, which are iconic.

Hampton "Hoppy" Henton, a longtime tobacco farmer in Woodford County, said the old barns have fallen into disrepair because so many farmers have moved away from growing the crop.

Autopsy: Man overdosed at US border station

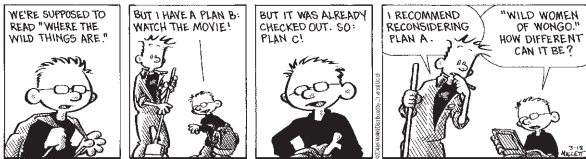
CA SAN DIEGO — An American citizen died of a methamphetamine overdose at a U.S. Border Patrol station near San Diego shortly after a paramedic thought he might be faking a seizure, an autopsy concluded.

Steven Brian Keith, 58, died Dec. 25, about seven hours after he was stopped at a Border Patrol checkpoint on Interstate 8 and arrested on suspicion of drug possession, the San Diego County Office of the Medical Examiner said Friday. Marijuana and a pipe with methamphetamine residue were allegedly found in his vehicle.

The death at the Campo station, about 60 miles east of San Diego, was ruled an accident.

From wire reports

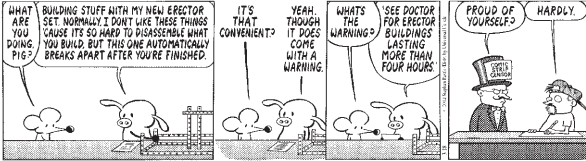
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



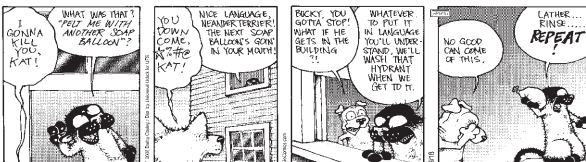
Non Sequitur



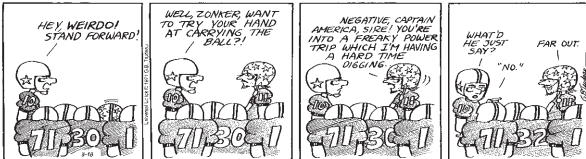
Candorville



Get Fuzzy



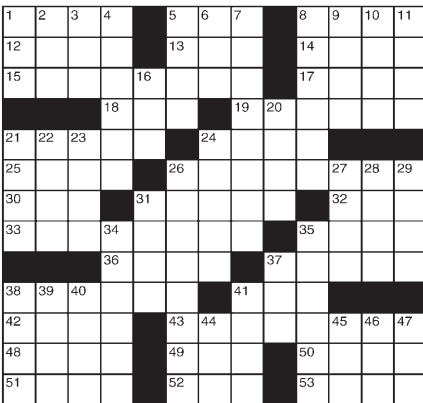
Doonesbury



Fort Knox



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Frost
- 5 Homer's interjection
- 8 Melody
- 12 Otherwise
- 13 Greek mountain
- 14 Great Lake
- 15 Museum employee
- 17 Dudley Do-Right's supply
- 18 Cartoonist's
- 19 Concealed
- 21 Task
- 24 Mexican money
- 25 Golf target
- 26 Curb
- 30 As well
- 31 Docking place
- 32 Comic Leno
- 33 Antsy
- 35 Senate staffer
- 36 Baserunner's goal
- 37 Fortuneteller's cards
- 38 Ill will
- 41 Help
- 42 The Tentmaker
- 43 Limit
- 44 Dryer fuzz
- 49 "Roscoe"
- 50 Rim
- 51 Vortex
- 52 Historic period
- 53 Dirt

DOWN

- 1 Yon maiden
- 2 Bullring bravo
- 3 Foolish one
- 4 Go to bed
- 5 Actor Bogarde
- 6 Praise in verse
- 7 Reaps
- 8 Elder
- 9 Hurler Hersheriser
- 10 Cleopatra's river
- 11 Neuter a horse
- 16 Individual
- 20 Book after Neh.
- 21 Burn somewhat
- 22 Sharpen
- 23 Bygone car maker
- 24 Intrinsically
- 26 Show up again
- 27 Open a bit
- 28 Shakespeare villain
- 29 Russian refusal
- 31 United nations
- 34 XXX
- 35 San Diego team
- 37 — for tat
- 38 Double agent
- 39 In the thick of
- 40 Come to earth
- 41 "The Thin Man" dog
- 44 Listener
- 45 Bachelor's last words
- 46 Hollywood trickery (Abbr.)
- 47 — Aviv

Answer to Previous Puzzle



3-18

CRYPTOQUIP

W'S FPXCJ CJ PXBCKKWV F
JGVVFH JGCJ GCTX XVP CFXM
SX. ENI BNIK M HCE W

GCTX C KWTWM SXSNP.
Yesterday's Cryptquip: ISLAND GROPE IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN THAT'S HOME TO A HUGE BRUIN POPULATION: BEAR-MUDA.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: S equals M

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Ernie Gates

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OPINION



VLADIMIR GHIRDA/AP

Pro-Russian people celebrate in Lenin Square in Simferopol, Ukraine, on Sunday after voters in the Crimean Peninsula chose to secede from Ukraine and allow the region to become part of Russia.

Only EU sanctions could slow Putin as he considers annexing Crimea

By JOHN HUDSON
Foreign Policy

The Obama administration and its allies could not prevent an overwhelming majority of Crimea's residents from voting to secede from Ukraine. It's looking increasingly likely that they also won't be able to prevent Russian strongman Vladimir Putin from annexing the restive Ukrainian peninsula. Western powers spent much of the last week asking Putin and Crimea's new pro-Russian government to cancel the secession referendum, but the appeals failed and residents of Crimea turned out in droves Sunday to vote. There had never been much doubt about what the outcome would be in the pro-Russian peninsula of Ukraine, but the margins were still startling. With 50 percent of the votes counted, more than 95 percent of voters opted to join Russia and secede from Ukraine, according to local Crimean election officials. The officials said 80 percent of eligible voters turned out to cast ballots.

In separate statements Sunday, the United States and European Union called the vote illegal and refused to recognize its results. "This referendum is contrary to Ukraine's constitution, and the international community will not recognize the results of a poll administered under threats of violence and intimidation from a Russian military intervention that violates international law," said White House press secretary Jay Carney.

In a statement from all 28 member states, the E.U. called the vote "illegal" and called on Russia to return its troops to their barracks. "The European Union has a special responsibility for peace, stability and prosperity on the European continent and will continue pursuing these objectives using all available channels," read the statement.

Russia's State Duma has said it will discuss whether to annex Crimea, making it a "federal subject" of the Russian Federa-

tion, on Friday. If Moscow decides to move ahead, Washington and its allies have already said they won't recognize Russian sovereignty over Crimea. As with Russia's recognition of the separatist Georgian enclaves of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in 2008, Crimea's absorption into Russia is likely to be contested by the international community for years, if not decades, to come.

President Barack Obama emphasized his refusal to accept Russian control over Crimea during a tense Sunday phone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Obama, according to a later White House statement, said the referendum "would never be recognized by the United States and the international community" and that a clear path toward resolving the crisis diplomatically remains in play. U.S. officials hoped to broker a deal giving Crimea wide autonomy under Kiev, a diplomatic "off ramp" rejected by a number of Crimean voters. The referendum offered voters the choice of absorption into Russia or remaining in Ukraine but with greater autonomy. According to local officials, voters sided overwhelmingly with joining Russia.

A number of hawks in Congress reacted angrily to the latest events and stepped up calls for imposing tougher economic sanctions against Russian officials and businesses. "No more reset buttons. No more 'Tell Vladimir I'll be more flexible,'" Sen. John McCain told CNN. "Treat him for what he is — an individual who believes in restoring the old Russian empire."

The Obama administration and European Union were preparing to sanction Russia this week, beginning with asset freezes and visa bans targeting members of Putin's inner circle and several top Russian oligarchs. Congress is also drafting a hard-hitting sanctions bill, but its fate remains uncertain because of a dispute over an unrelated provision about reforming the International Monetary Fund. "The sanctions that we passed out of our Foreign Relations Committee are very biting, one of a kind," Tennessee Sen. Bob Corker,

the top Republican on the panel, told Fox News. He referred to a new sanctions bill passed by the committee last week that has yet to be voted on by the entire Senate.

But many observers note that U.S. economic sanctions alone are unlikely to influence Putin or Russia's elite governing class given the relatively small amount of annual trade between the two countries. EU sanctions, on the other hand, could deliver a powerful blow to Russia, but could also destabilize Europe's post-recession economies.

Moscow, meanwhile, is using thousands of its troops to establish facts on the ground in Crimea, just as it did in Georgia several years ago. In 2008, Georgian troops fought a series of low-level skirmishes with separatist forces in the breakaway region of South Ossetia. Russia intervened on behalf of the separatists and pushed the Georgian forces out. Tbilisi and Moscow severed their diplomatic ties, and South Ossetia and Abkhazia have been occupied by Russian forces ever since.

In a recent interview with FP, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili acknowledged that the provinces would remain de facto parts of Russia until their residents decided their lives would be better as part of Georgia. Unlike his predecessor, he didn't speak of reconquering the breakaway regions, a reflection of the fact that Russia has been tightening, not loosening, its control over the regions.

Garibashvili said that Russian forces have begun building 30 miles of barbed wire fencing along the border with South Ossetia. The work stopped in December, weeks before the start of the Sochi Olympics. When the games ended, the work resumed. "That's crazy, right?" Garibashvili asked in the interview.

Crazy or not, the residents of Crimea have willingly chosen to join Putin's Russia. And rhetoric aside, it's far from clear that the West will manage to preserve Ukraine's territorial integrity any more successfully than it did with Georgia's.

OPINION

Obama not protecting Israel as ally should

By JACKSON DIEHL
The Washington Post

Two weeks ago President Barack Obama took time off from the crisis in Ukraine to pursue the foreign policy cause that, together with nuclear disarmament, has been closest to his heart: Israeli-Palestinian peace. Having invited Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the White House, Obama welcomed him by publicly declaring to Bloomberg View's Jeffrey Goldberg that Israel "could face a bleak future — one of international isolation and demographic disaster — if [Netanyahu] refuses to endorse a U.S. drafted framework agreement for peace," as Goldberg summed it up.

Fair enough, you might say. An April 29 deadline for obtaining agreement to the framework is getting close, so it's time for a little pressure. But twisting it follows that when Mahmoud Abbas troops into the Oval Office for his meeting on Monday, he should be met with equally dire predictions of Palestinian doom if he fails to accept the framework. So far, there's no sign of it: no presidential interviews, no statements by Secretary of State John Kerry, no leaks of potential U.S. punitive measures if Abbas — repeating a long personal and Palestinian history — says no. Therein lies the fallacy that has bedeviled this Middle East diplomacy for the past five years.

Obama, as he made clear in the

Goldberg interview, perceives Abbas as the golden key to Mideast peace — "the most politically moderate leader the Palestinians may ever have," as Goldberg paraphrased it — and Netanyahu as the potential spoiler. "I believe that President Abbas is sincere about his willingness to recognize Israel and its right to exist," the president said. "You've got a partner on the other side who is prepared to negotiate seriously ... for us not to seize this moment would be a great mistake."

But is Obama right about Abbas? Netanyahu, like most Israelis, doesn't think so — and with some reason. The Palestinian president — who was elected to a four-year term in 2005 and has been in office for five years after its expiration — turned down President George W. Bush's request that he sign on to a similar framework in 2008. In 2010, after Obama strong-armed Netanyahu into declaring a moratorium on Jewish settlement construction in the West Bank, Abbas refused to negotiate for nine of the designated 10 months, then broke off the talks after two meetings.

Abbas agreed to Kerry's proposal for another nine-month moratorium on settlement construction last year in exchange for Israel's release of more than 100 Palestinian prisoners, including many convicted of murdering civilians. Abbas hailed them as heroes. Then he embarked on a public campaign to discredit the two principal prisoners, including many convicted of murdering civilians. Abbas hailed them as heroes. Then he embarked on a public campaign to discredit the two principal prisoners, including many convicted of murdering civilians. Abbas hailed them as heroes. Then he embarked on a public campaign to discredit the two principal prisoners, including many convicted of murdering civilians.



A Palestinian boy holds a poster of the late leader Yasser Arafat, right, and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas ahead of Abbas' meeting with President Barack Obama, during a rally in the West Bank town of Tubas on Sunday.

have had Washington's support. One would allow Israeli soldiers to remain along the Palestinian-Jordanian border during an extended transition period; the other would involve Palestinian recognition that Israel is a Jewish state.

The "Jewish state" question is hard for many non-Israelis to understand. Who cares what Arabs call Israel, so long as they accept it? But for Netanyahu and his followers, the question is essential. Arab leaders have never conceded that a non-Arab state can hold a permanent place in the Middle East, they say. Until they

do so, there will be no real peace, because Palestinians will keep pressing to weaken and eventually eliminate Israel's Jewish majority.

Obama and Kerry have endorsed the Jewish-state principle; their hope was to use it to leverage Netanyahu's acceptance of framework language stipulating that the territory of a Palestinian state would be equal to, if not exactly the same as, the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Some in the Israeli media are betting that Netanyahu most likely would accept that outcome — albeit with many reservations — even at the risk of

losing his right-wing governing coalition. After all, the price of saying no, repeatedly underlined by Kerry and Obama, is daunting: more boycotts, more anti-Israel initiatives at the United Nations, perhaps even another violent Palestinian uprising.

In short, Netanyahu has resigned himself to the likelihood that the U.S. framework will include provisions he's not ready to endorse. Abbas has not. "There is no way. We will not accept," the Palestinian news agency quoted him as saying of the Jewish-state principle on March 7. Two days later, Abbas persuaded the moribund Arab League to adopt a resolution backing him up. He's said much the same about Israeli troops on the border.

Why does Abbas dare to publicly campaign against the U.S. and Israeli position even before arriving in Washington? Simple: "Abbas believes he can say no to the talks fail, submit petitions to the United Nations and watch the anti-Israel boycotts mushroom, while paying no price of his own."

Perhaps Obama will disabuse him of that notion at their meeting Monday. If not, another "peace press" breakdown is surely coming.

Jackson Diehl is deputy editorial page editor for The Washington Post.

Cuban missile crisis precedent for Netanyahu's actions

By URI DROMI
The Miami Herald

In light of a ship caught carrying aggressive weapons, aimed at terrorizing his fellow countrymen, the leader delivered a firm message, warning that neither his country "nor the world community of nations can tolerate deliberate deception and offensive threats on the part of any nation, large or small. We no longer live in a world where only the actual firing of weapons represents a sufficient challenge to a nation's security to constitute maximum peril."

He went on to explain to his worried viewers and listeners that the missiles which had just been found, once reaching their destination and being deployed, could have hit any target, including the nation's capital.

This was Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, speaking at Eilat port last week while pointing at the Cloc C ship, caught by the Israeli navy carrying a deadly Iranian cargo of assorted munitions, including rockets. These rockets, in Netanyahu's words, were smuggled "for fatal purposes against Israel to hurt Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and even Haifa."

No, it was rather President John

F. Kennedy, who, after a secret Soviet enterprise to deploy missiles in Cuba had been revealed, delivered an address on Oct. 22, 1962, declaring that in order "to halt this offensive buildup, a strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba is being initiated."

The rest is history. The world held its breath watching the United States and the Soviet Union coming so close to a nuclear war, and was relieved when the crisis was over. The lesson emanating from this crucial historical moment is that resilience and steadfastness vis-a-vis your enemy eventually pays.

I'm not sure Netanyahu, when speaking in Eilat about the evil schemes of Iran, had Kennedy in mind, as a hero of the free world who had stood up against the Soviet warmongers. Usually, he prefers to quote Winston Churchill, who, as a British parliamentarian before World War II, raised a lone voice against his government's policy of appeasement when confronted with Nazi Germany's aggression.

Whoever his historical role model may have been, Netanyahu strongly believes that "history has taught us that to prevent war tomorrow, we must be firm today," as he rightly said in his

speech at the U.N. General Assembly on Oct. 1, 2013. This is why he couldn't hide his disappointment in Eilat, when he referred to what he conceived as the surrendering of the West to Iran's new flirting tactics. "We are revealing the truth behind the deceiving smiles of Iran," he said, "to expose the delusion that Iran is changing direction."

I can easily empathize with him. Unlike Kennedy, who spoke about a potential threat, Israel's prime minister was talking about real danger, one that already has harmed the Israelis. Indeed, on Wednesday, the same type of rockets found a week earlier in the Cloc C ship were indiscriminately fired from Gaza toward Israel's southern cities.

The world, though, didn't seem to be convinced, and many foreign correspondents who had been invited to the press conference in Eilat chose to stay home. In Netanyahu's bitter words, that was "evidence of the era of hypocrisy in which we are living."

However, as long as Netanyahu was concerned, the rockets and the mortars found in the Cloc C were only the tip of the iceberg. He quickly turned to his favorite subject: nuclear Iran. "Just as Iran hid its deadly missiles in the belly of this ship," he said,

"Iran is hiding its actions and its intentions in many of its key installations for developing nuclear weapons."

Summing up, the Israeli prime minister addressed the reluctant world once again. "My message today is simple: Those engaged in self-deception must waken from their slumber," he said. "We cannot allow Iran to continue building nuclear weapons. Today, Israel exposed Iran's attempts against its people. Tomorrow, the whole world could be involved."

Netanyahu's attempt to sound the alarm echoes the words of Kennedy, when, in his blockaded speech five decades ago, he warned that the Soviet missiles in Cuba were "capable of striking most of the major cities in the Western Hemisphere, ranging as far north as Hudson Bay, Canada, and as far south as Lima, Peru."

I wonder if people in Lima were really terrified in 1962 at the prospect of Soviet missiles hitting them, as I'm not sure if people in Munich or Paris are losing a good night's sleep today because of Netanyahu's warning, that they are next in turn.

What is more important, however, and here the analogy ends, is that in 1962, the president of the United States concluded that the Soviet missiles in Cuba posed

such a clear and imminent danger to the security of America that he was willing to do anything to take them out, even at the risk of a nuclear war. President Barack Obama, on the other hand, while declaring that a nuclear Iran was "unacceptable," and that "all the options are on the table," reduced sanctions on Iran, thus giving diplomacy a priority over more militant courses.

Netanyahu's frustration is understandable, but he shouldn't defy the president of Israel's greatest ally, and definitely not unleash AIPAC, the Jewish lobby, to foil Obama's moves in Congress. What he can and should do, though, is use all the quiet channels available to keep reminding Obama of his vows.

In the meantime, following in the tradition that Israel should always be able to defend itself, Israel's intelligence services and navy have already shown their excellence in capturing Cloc C, so far away south of our shores. Let's hope that Obama's Iranian gambit works, so that Netanyahu, as a last resort, won't be forced to send the Israeli air force to the east as well.

Uri Dromi writes about Israeli affairs for The Miami Herald.

SHIFTING GEARS



PHOTOS BY TONY OVERMAN, THE OLYMPIAN/AP

Above: Student Mike Murphy, of Yelm, Wash., washes a Dodge Viper SRT in the automotive shop at South Puget Sound Community College in Tumwater, Wash., on March 4. Chrysler has ordered the entire collection of educational Vipers to be crushed. Below: Automotive professors Tom Witt, left, and Norm Chapman supervise as Murphy prepares to fire up the Viper.

Chrysler defends move to destroy donated Vipers

By BRENT SNAVELY
Detroit Free Press

Chrysler is defending its request for educational colleges and trade schools to destroy Dodge Vipers it donated about 20 years ago.

The automaker says it wants the colleges to abide by agreements they signed when the cars were loaned. Some colleges, however, have grown attached to the cars and are reluctant to destroy a coveted piece of auto history.

According to a newspaper in Olympia, Wash., professors and students at South Puget Sound Community College were shocked after Chrysler told them

‘Limber up your petition-signin’ fingers and prepare to channel some outrage.’

Jalopnik
automotive blog

to destroy the \$250,000 pre-production Viper within two weeks.

The school's 1992 Dodge Viper was the fourth one Chrysler made.

Reports about Chrysler's order

to destroy the sports cars has triggered an emotional debate on some websites.

“Limber up your petition-signin’ fingers and prepare to channel some outrage,” Jalopnik wrote in a story published Thursday.

Some media outlets reported that some of the Vipers — which were never certified to be driven on the road — have been involved in traffic accidents.

“We have no records of any crashes, or any records of any lawsuits,” said Chrysler spokesman Michael Palese.

Chrysler said the 30 to 40 Vipers it donated have outlived their educational purposes.



Public outcry prompts Chrysler to issue an official response



CHRYSLER

March 6, 2014, Auburn Hills, Mich. — Attributed to Chrysler Group LLC.

Approximately 10 years ago, Chrysler Group donated a number of Dodge Viper vehicles to various trade schools for educational purposes. As part of the donation process, it is standard procedure — and stipulated in our agreements — that whenever vehicles are donated to institutions for education purposes that they are to be de-

stroyed when they are no longer needed for their intended educational purposes. With advancements in automotive technology over the past decade, it is unlikely that these vehicles offer any educational value to students. Chrysler Group fully understands and appreciates the historical significance of the Viper and is very active in preserving many of its legendary models and designs for historic purposes however, none of these vehicles fit into this category.

Chrysler Group has no record of any legal proceedings involving Dodge Viper vehicles donated to educational institutions being involved in accidents and product liability lawsuits.



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US MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC SALES IN GERMANY



WORLD



EDUARDO CASTILLO/AP

This iron ore mining operation near the Pacific port of Lazaro Cardenas, Mexico, was operated by the Knights Templar drug cartel as it diversified its business.

Mexico's drug cartels expand business model

By E. EDUARDO CASTILLO
The Associated Press

LAZARO CARDENAS, Mexico — Forget crystal meth. The pseudo-religious Knights Templar drug cartel in western Mexico has diversified to the point that drug trafficking doesn't even rank among its top sources of income.

The cartel counts illegal mining, logging and extortion as its biggest moneymakers, said Alfredo Castillo, the Mexican government's special envoy sent to restore the rule of law in Michoacan, the state controlled by the Knights Templar the last several years.

Iron ore "is their principle source of income," Castillo told The Associated Press. "They're charging \$15 (a metric ton) for the process, from extraction to transport, processing, storage, permits and finally export."

The ore itself doesn't go for that price; the cartel skims \$15 for every ton arriving in port.

While it's long been known that Mexican cartels engage in other types of criminal activity, including trafficking of people and pirated goods, this is the government's first official acknowledgement that a major organized crime group has moved beyond drugs. The Knights Templar and its predecessor, La Familia, started out as major producers and transporters of methamphetamine.

The implications are enormous that organized crime in general in Mexico stands to diversify and become even more entrenched.

"It's a criminal organization like the mafia," said Antonio Mazzitelli, the Mexico and Central America representative to the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime. "La Familia, the Knights Tem-

plar and, in part, the new, smaller cartels that have developed, like the New Generation Jalisco, are copying this new typology."

Mexican authorities count at least 12 major cartels, but also talk of an untold numbers of smaller splinter groups. Federal prosecutors have not seen similar shifts in other cartels, according to an Attorney General's Office official, who insisted on speaking anonymously because he wasn't authorized to speak about the topic.

Experts disagreed. The Zetas cartel, with its strongholds along the U.S.-Mexico border, was among the first to change the business model from merely production and transport of drugs to migrant smuggling and controlling territory through terrorism. Though drugs still top their list, the Zetas likely make as much from kidnapping and extortion, said Samuel Logan, director of Southern Pulse security consulting firm.

"I've never looked at them as drug-trafficking organizations," Logan said of Mexico's cartels. "They're multinational corporations that will react to market pressures and do what they have to do to stay in business."

The Knights Templar took the model to another level, exploiting the main industries of the territory they control.

Alonso Ancira, president of the National Chamber of the Iron and Steel, recently told local journalists that he estimated drug cartels earned \$1 billion in profits from selling iron ore in 2013. It was unclear if Ancira was referring only to the illegal mining done by the Knights Templar, and he didn't respond to an interview request from the AP.

60 Mexicans detained crossing border in immigration protest

The Associated Press

TIJUANA, Mexico — Sixty Mexican migrants were detained Sunday by U.S. authorities after they crossed into the United States from the border city of Tijuana as part of a protest against U.S. immigration policies.

It was the third such group to try to enter the U.S. at the Otay Mesa border crossing in San Diego and ask for asylum in a week.

The group, led by two young sisters whose parents live in North Carolina, held signs that read "Undocumented Unashamed," and "Immigration reform starts here." They said before crossing that they were protesting a growing number of deportations during President Barack Obama's administration and demanding an overhaul of U.S. immigration

laws.

The sisters, Jacqueline and Marisol Aparicio, ages 11 and 12, said they want to reunite with their parents, whom they haven't seen in 10 years.

Mothers holding their children's hands, young students and others met outside a Tijuana health clinic before heading to the U.S.

Among them was Felipe Molina, 22, who wants to get back to North Carolina where his family lives.

"I lived in Durham (North Carolina) from age 8 to 18. I went to high school there, my parents and sisters still live there," Molina said. "I came back to Mexico ... because I wanted to study sound engineering. I couldn't study in the U.S. because it was too expensive for foreigners."

Molina said he studied and worked in Mexico but couldn't finish university because money was scarce. He said he has suffered discrimination because he is gay.

Demonstrators known as "dreamers" first claimed asylum at border crossings in Arizona and Texas last year. They call themselves "dreamers" after the Dream Act, failed legislation that was designed to allow some young immigrants to stay in the U.S.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection said privacy laws prohibit the agency from saying what happened to those who have tried to enter the country and asked for asylum.

Migrant rights activists said another group would cross from Tijuana into the United States on Tuesday.

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BUSINESS/WEATHER

Jack Daniel's is opposing Tenn. whiskey law change

By ERIC SCHLEZIG
AND BRIK SCHREINER
The Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — If it isn't fermented in Tennessee from mash of at least 51 percent corn, aged in new, charred oak barrels, filtered through maple charcoal and bottled at a minimum of 80 proof, it isn't Tennessee whiskey. So says a year-old law that resembles almost to the letter the process used to make Jack Daniel's, the world's best-known Tennessee whiskey.

Now state lawmakers are considering dialing back some of those requirements that they say make it too difficult for craft distilleries to market their spirit as Tennessee whiskey, a distinctive and popular draw in the booming American liquor business.

The people behind Jack Daniel's see the hand of a bigger competitor at work — Diageo PLC, the British conglomerate that owns George Dickel, another Tennessee whiskey made about 15 miles up the road.

"It's really more to weaken a title on a label that we've worked very hard for," said Jeff Arnett, the master distiller at the Jack Daniel's distillery in Lynchburg, Tenn. "As a state, I don't think Tennessee should be bashful about being protective of Tennessee whiskey over, say, bourbon or scotch or any of the other products that we compete with."

Republican state Rep. Bill Sanderson emphasized that his bill wouldn't do away with last year's law enacted largely on the behest of Jack Daniel's corporate parent, Louisville, Ky.-based Brown-Forman Corp. The principal change would be to allow Tennessee whiskey makers to re-use barrels, which he said would present considerable savings over new ones that can cost \$600 each.

"There are a lot of ways to make high-quality whiskey, even if it's not necessarily the way Jack Daniel's does it," Sanderson said. "What gives them the right to call their Tennessee whiskey and not others?"

Sanderson acknowledged that he introduced the measure at Diageo's urging, but



MARK HUMPHREY/AP

Jeff Arnett, the master distiller at the Jack Daniel's distillery in Lynchburg, Tenn., tests whiskey in 2009.

said it would also help microdistilleries opening across the state. Diageo picked up on the same theme.

"This isn't about Diageo, as all of our Tennessee whiskey is made with new oak," said Diageo executive vice president Guy L. Smith IV. "This is about Brown-Forman trying to stifle competition and the entrepreneurial spirit of microdistillers."

"We are not sure what they are afraid of, as we feel new, innovative products from a new breed of distillers is healthy for the entire industry," he said.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (March 18)	\$1.4263
Dollar buys (March 18)	€0.7011
British pound (March 18)	\$1.70
Japanese yen (March 18)	99.00
South Korean won (March 18)	1,042.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3771
British pound	\$1.6653/6.005
Canada (dollar)	1.1079
China (Yuan)	6.1784
Denmark (Krone)	5.3532
Egypt (Pound)	0.8627
Euro	\$1.3940/0.7174
Hong Kong (Dollar)	0.7550
Hungary (Forint)	223.75
Israel (Shekel)	3.4568
Japan (Yen)	101.78
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2813
Norway (Krone)	5.9343
Philippines (Peso)	44.70
Poland (Zloty)	3.03
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7505
Singapore (Dollar)	1.2640
South Korea (Won)	1,068.18
Switzerland (Franc)	0.8719
Thailand (Baht)	32.25
Turkey (New Lira)	2.2206
Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., rates provided for reference when buying currency, check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	
INTEREST RATES	
Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	3.75
Federal funds market rate	0.08
3-month bill	0.05
30-year bond	3.59

WEATHER OUTLOOK



Tuesday's US temperatures

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr
Ablene, Tex	78	50	Cld	Chatanooga	56	41	Cldy	Fort Wayne	52	22	PCldy	Louisville	64	31	PCldy
Akron, Ohio	50	23	PCldy	Chicago	50	27	Cldy	Fresno	73	47	Cir	Lubbock	65	41	PCldy
Albany, N.Y.	47	5	Cir	Cincinnati	59	31	PCldy	Grand Junction	47	25	PCldy	Macon	56	44	Cldy
Albuquerque	55	36	Cir	Cleveland	49	24	PCldy	Grand Rapids	47	21	Cldy	Madison	56	35	Cldy
Allentown, Pa.	42	20	PCldy	Colorado Springs	43	32	Cldy	Great Falls	40	25	Cldy	Medford	62	32	Cir
Amarillo	56	36	Cir	Columbia, S.C.	45	38	Cldy	Greensboro, N.C.	40	29	Cldy	Miami Beach	80	76	Cldy
Anchorage	55	23	Cldy	Columbus, Ga.	62	47	Cldy	Hartford	41	23	PCldy	Midland-Odesa	73	45	Cldy
Asheville	47	32	Cldy	Columbus, Ohio	56	30	Cir	Harrisburg	41	23	PCldy	Milwaukee	38	26	Cldy
Atlanta	55	42	Cldy	Concord, N.H.	33	0	Cir	Hartford	41	23	PCldy	Mpls-St Paul	40	30	Snow
Atlantic City	44	34	Cldy	Corpus Christi	83	46	Cir	Helena	41	26	Cldy	Missoula	41	28	Cldy
Austin	79	40	Cldy	Dallas-Ft Worth	75	47	PCldy	Honolulu	80	69	Cir	Mobile	66	42	PCldy
Baltimore	39	25	Cldy	Dayton	57	30	PCldy	Houston	78	44	Cldy	Montgomery	66	42	PCldy
Baton Rouge	70	36	Cir	Daytona Beach	74	64	Cldy	Huntsville	62	41	Cldy	Nashville	65	34	Cldy
Bilings	43	30	Cldy	Denver	45	29	Cldy	Indianapolis	57	31	PCldy	New Orleans	65	42	Cir
Birmingham	63	39	PCldy	Des Moines	55	35	Cldy	Jackson, Miss.	68	35	Cir	New York City	40	21	Cir
Bismarck	41	28	Cir	Detroit	43	19	PCldy	Jacksonville	68	56	Rain	Newark	42	21	Cir
Boise	49	27	Cir	Duluth	31	1	Snow	Juneau	36	32	Rain	Norfolk, Va.	44	33	Rain
Boston	34	14	Cldy	El Paso	73	51	PCldy	Kansas City	61	40	PCldy	North Platte	41	33	Cir
Bridgeport	42	16	Cldy	Elkins	48	22	Cldy	Knoxville	58	40	Cldy	Omaha	51	40	Cldy
Brownsville	84	50	Cir	Erie	43	23	PCldy	La Crosse	69	42	Cir	Orlando	77	65	Cir
Buffalo	42	15	PCldy	Eugene	52	34	Cldy	La Charles	69	42	Cir	Paducah	63	33	PCldy
Burlington, Vt.	28	-4	Cir	Fargo	62	32	PCldy	Lansing	45	22	Cldy	Pendleton	53	30	PCldy
Caribou, Maine	23	-6	Cir	Fairbanks	-28	-3	Cldy	Las Vegas	67	52	Cir	Philadelphia	42	23	Cir
Casper	36	25	Cldy	Fargo	35	28	Snow	Lexington	63	31	PCldy	Phoenix	83	57	Cir
Charleston, S.C.	52	44	Rain	Flagstaff	50	28	Cir	Lincoln	50	40	Cldy	Pittsburgh	50	23	PCldy
Charlotte, N.C.	55	29	PCldy	Flint	43	16	PCldy	Little Rock	69	36	PCldy				
	42	32	Cldy	Fort Smith	69	39	PCldy	Los Angeles	74	55	PCldy				

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

National temperature extremes
Hi: Sun., 94, Miramar Naval Air Station, Calif., and Death Valley, Calif.
Lo: Sun., -27, Crane Lake, Minn.

FACES



JAY JANNER, AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN/AP

Kool Aid Jones of the Dallas band Diamond Kings performs March 15 at The 512 at SXSW in Austin, Texas. The South By Southwest conference has concentrated in the past on showcasing new talent, but performers have been angered this year by evidence that the event is more profit-focused.

SXSW fest goes corporate

Bands, fans dismayed by trend toward profit-making

By CHRIS TALBOTT
The Associated Press

Rapper ScHoolboy Q had a great time at his first South By Southwest a few years ago, but found himself getting angry this year as he played a series of shows at the annual music conference and festival.

Everywhere he turned, his fans were standing outside venues festooned with corporate branding, unable to enter because they didn't have an invite. "It's stupid. They changed it all up. It's corporate," he said as he prepared for a show March 15. "I don't ever want to come back unless they change it to where the fans are in. I'm tired of performing and seeing my fans outside the gate... That's not fair. It's not about the fans no more, it's all about money, who can give you the best look."

As South By Southwest shuttered its 28th year Sunday, participants debated the growing corporate influence on the conference. Critics say SXSW has evolved past its core mission: to help new bands get discovered. Instead, they say, the media focus has shifted to already-established stars such as Jay Z, Kanye West, Lady Gaga, Coldplay, CeeLo Green, Rick Ross, Keith Urban and many more whose heavily promoted appearances are underwritten by international brands.

It's poor vs. the 1 percent in miniature, and this

change in vibe is relatively new.

James Minor, general manager of the music portion of the festival, says he still thinks the focus is aimed at discovery, and that organizers are sensitive to groups most music fans have yet to hear about.

"I feel incredibly responsible for all of these acts that we invite because it costs a lot of money to get here," Minor said. "If somebody's going to travel to Austin,

you want to make sure that they're playing in front of people, that they're going to get something out of South By Southwest. We invite acts we feel

have already gained some kind of momentum that could kind of use the festival as a platform to help them up to the next level."

The initial hurdle is the festival's sheer popularity. It has grown exponentially since it first started in 1987 with 177 acts appearing on 15 stages. This year more than 2,300 acts performed on 111 stages.

"South By Southwest is boom or bust, and you can be on either side of the moon, seriously," said Aloe Blacc, who sings the hit "The Man." "I've seen it, and I don't envy the bands who spend their last dollar to get here and play for no one."

case with other bands," he said.

"In the Grateful Dead's case, (they) also indicated a writer who never played an instrument," said Stanley, referring to Robert Hunter's inclusion when the band was inducted in 1994. "Or they've inducted rap artists, or they've inducted people who have been in the band for seven years as opposed to... 25 years or 20 years... whatever their criteria of this week is."

A representative for the Rock Hall didn't immediately return an email seeking comment.

Kiss wrote on its website last month that it would not perform at the Rock Hall induction.

The original members from 1973 — Stanley, Gene Simmons, Peter Criss and Ace Frehley — are scheduled for induction. Criss left the band in 1980 and Frehley left in 1982. Other members joined during the 1980s, but the current lineup includes Singer, who joined in 1992, and Thayer, who came on board in 2003.

Stanley, 62, said the Rock Hall "tried to strong-arm us into playing in original lineup," but the band would not do so.

"Their craving of nostalgia or for wanting to have us play by their rules in many ways jeopardizes what we have spent 40 years building," he said.

'Mr. Peabody' tops box office

From wire services

The animated comedy "Mr. Peabody & Sherman" scored a box-office victory with a strong second weekend as "Need for Speed" fell short of expectations, "Tyler Perry's The Single Moms Club" bombed and "The Grand Budapest Hotel" continued to impress in limited release.

The 3-D "Mr. Peabody," featuring the voice of Ty Burrell and centered on a hyper-intelligent, time-traveling dog and his adopted boy, took in an estimated \$21.2 million from Friday through Sunday in the U.S. and Canada to claim the top spot.

Two weekends ago, the adaptation of the Jay Ward characters opened in second place behind the 3-D action sequel "300: Rise of an Empire." This past weekend's take for "Mr. Peabody" was just 34 percent less than its debut.

"Need for Speed," the \$66 million car-chase picture starring Aaron Paul, generated \$17.8 million in ticket sales in its first three days, good for third place behind "300: Rise of an Empire," which collected \$19.1 million.

"Need for Speed" fared better overseas, pulling in \$45.6 million.

"The Single Moms Club" grossed a disappointing \$8.3 million, missing expectations of around \$18 million. That marks Perry's lowest opening ever as a director.

"The Grand Budapest Hotel," the latest from quirky director Wes Anderson, generated \$3.6 million from just 66 theaters.

"Veronica Mars," the Kickstarter project based on the TV show that ended in 2007, took in about \$2 million and scored a solid \$7,000 per screen.

New Presley CDs feature Memphis stop

Elvis Presley's concert in Memphis in March 1974, when he returned to the city during a U.S. tour to perform in his hometown for the first time in 13 years, is featured in a new two-CD set.

RCA Records and Legacy Recordings say "Elvis Recorded Live On Stage in Memphis" goes on sale Tuesday.

The set includes a remastered version of the full concert, includ-

ing songs that weren't on the original July 7, 1974, release on vinyl.

Other news

■ **Chris Brown** was arrested Friday and held without bail on a warrant issued by probation officials in the latest legal entanglement for the R&B singer, who has struggled to put his 2009 attack on Rihanna behind him. Brown was to appear in court in Los Angeles on Monday afternoon.

■ **Actor Chris Pine**, known for playing Captain Kirk in the "Star Trek" movies, pleaded guilty Monday in a New Zealand court to a charge of drunken driving. Police pulled over Pine early on March 1. Police told the court that a blood test found Pine's blood-alcohol level was 0.11 percent, which is over New Zealand's legal limit of 0.08 percent. Pine was fined \$93 in New Zealand dollars (\$79) and had his New Zealand driver's license suspended for six months.

■ **Comedian David Brenner**, the lanky, toothy-grinned "Tonight Show" favorite whose brand of observational comedy became a staple for other standups, including Jerry Seinfeld and Paul Reiser, died Saturday after battling cancer. He was 78. Brenner also briefly hosted his own syndicated talk show in 1987 and starred in four HBO specials.

■ **Oprah Winfrey** is selling Harpo Studios in Chicago to a developer, but the studio will remain on the property for another two years. Winfrey moved to Harpo Studios in 1990 and is credited with transforming the once-gritty industrial area to a neighborhood filled with families and trendy restaurants.

■ A federal judge in New York has left the rate that Internet radio giant Pandora must pay songwriters unchanged at 1.85 percent of revenue for the next two years, according to ASCAP — the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers.

■ President Barack Obama's appearance on the "Between Two Ferns" satirical online talk show with Zach Galifianakis on March 11 had been viewed more than 15 million times in the first four days, according to the website Funny or Die.

Kiss miffed at Rock Hall of Fame diss

By MESFIN FEKADU
The Associated Press

Paul Stanley of Kiss wants it known: The band is miffed at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame for not inducting members Eric Singer and Tommy Thayer along with the original lineup.

Kiss is scheduled to be inducted into the Rock Hall on April 10 in New York City. But Stanley said Friday that he doesn't think the Rock Hall is being fair.

"We have continuing issues with the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, starting with the fact that they chose to only induct the original lineup when that's hardly the



VOLKER WICHO/A/P

Members of Kiss — from left, Paul Stanley, Eric Singer, Gene Simmons and Tommy Thayer — are shown in 2008. Stanley says the band is miffed at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame for not inducting Eric Singer and Tommy Thayer along with the band's original lineup.

Stripes

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GOLF

Roundup

Aussie Seniors get first win since 2006

The Associated Press

PALM HARBOR, Fla. — John Senden never imagined it would take more than seven years to win again. Even more surprising is how he won the Valspar Championship.

Sunday at Innisbrook had all the trappings of a tournament that is survived more than it is won.

Robert Garrigus, who started the final round with the lead, hit a tee shot that bounced off a lawn chair and wound up next to a tree, leading to a double bogey. Kevin Na, playing in the final group, missed a 3-foot putt and made a double bogey during a meltdown at the end of his front nine.

Each mistake brought more players into the mix on the Copperhead course until at one point there were nine players separated by three shots with more than an hour to go and the treacherous "Snake Pit" stretch of three fearsome closing holes ahead.

But that's where Senden seized control on the 16th hole, with a shot into the trees.

In a three-way tie for the lead with Na and Scott Langley, Senden's tee shot was

John Senden won the Valspar Championship on Sunday at Innisbrook in Palm Harbor, Fla., for his first PGA Tour victory since 2006.

CHRIS O'MEARA/AP

headed for a tiny forest when it smacked off a tree and left him an opening.

"I got a pretty good break there with hitting the tree and dropping straight down," he said. "Then I hit a really good second shot to get in some sort of position near the green. Walking up to the shot, I just felt like,

'OK, I need to hit a really good shot here to get this up-and-down and try to have a chance to do something down the stretch.'"

"I thought it came out well," he said. "It disappeared. Amazing."

He chipped in from 70 feet for birdie to break the tie. He made a 20-foot birdie putt on the next hole to stretch his lead to two shots. And when he could hear Na made a birdie putt on the 17th hole behind him to cut the lead to one, the 42-year-old Australian hit one might have been his best putt of the day that didn't go in.

It was a 40-foot putt that went up a ridge and moved slightly to the right, and then went down the slope and sharply to the left. Senden hit it to tap in for his par and a 1-under 70.

Senden finished at 7-under 277, the third straight event on the Florida swing where the winning score was single-digit under par. He wasn't thinking about all the perks that go along with winning, though he was clear on one thing — he won't have the week off the second week in April.

His only other PGA Tour win was in 2006 at the John Deere Classic. Senden capped off that year by winning the Australian Open at Royal Sydney.

"It's something that makes you believe more than you can get it done again, rather than just once and thinking back then in '06, 'Was it a flash in the pan?' I don't believe so," Senden said. "But now it makes me feel [validated] from the John Deere."

Champions Tour: At Newport Beach, Calif., Fred Couples won the Toshiba Classic for his 10th Champions title, birding the final two holes for a one-stroke victory. The 54-year-old Couples shot a 5-under 66 to finish at 15-under 198. Also the 2010 winner, he made a 4-foot birdie putt on the par-3 17th and holed another 4-footer on the par-5 18th.

Colin Montgomerie, Bernhard Langer and Steve Pate tied for second.

European Tour: Spanish Alejandro Canizares won the Trophée Hassan II by five strokes, shooting a 2-under 70 to complete a wire-to-wire victory at Palais Royal in Morocco.

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Trucks 174 Jeep, Ram, 2008 \$10,000.00 2008 4.7 engine 3.0 4.0 6.0 6.5 6.8 7.0 7.3 7.6 7.9 8.0 8.3 8.6 8.9 9.0 9.3 9.6 9.9 10.0 10.3 10.6 10.9 11.2 11.5 11.8 12.1 12.4 12.7 13.0 13.3 13.6 13.9 14.2 14.5 14.8 15.1 15.4 15.7 16.0 16.3 16.6 16.9 17.2 17.5 17.8 18.1 18.4 18.7 19.0 19.3 19.6 19.9 20.2 20.5 20.8 21.1 21.4 21.7 22.0 22.3 22.6 22.9 23.2 23.5 23.8 24.1 24.4 24.7 25.0 25.3 25.6 25.9 26.2 26.5 26.8 27.1 27.4 27.7 28.0 28.3 28.6 28.9 29.2 29.5 29.8 30.1 30.4 30.7 31.0 31.3 31.6 31.9 32.2 32.5 32.8 33.1 33.4 33.7 34.0 34.3 34.6 34.9 35.2 35.5 35.8 36.1 36.4 36.7 37.0 37.3 37.6 37.9 38.2 38.5 38.8 39.1 39.4 39.7 40.0 40.3 40.6 40.9 41.2 41.5 41.8 42.1 42.4 42.7 43.0 43.3 43.6 43.9 44.2 44.5 44.8 45.1 45.4 45.7 46.0 46.3 46.6 46.9 47.2 47.5 47.8 48.1 48.4 48.7 49.0 49.3 49.6 49.9 50.2 50.5 50.8 51.1 51.4 51.7 52.0 52.3 52.6 52.9 53.2 53.5 53.8 54.1 54.4 54.7 55.0 55.3 55.6 55.9 56.2 56.5 56.8 57.1 57.4 57.7 58.0 58.3 58.6 58.9 59.2 59.5 59.8 60.1 60.4 60.7 61.0 61.3 61.6 61.9 62.2 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SPORTS BRIEFS

Colts owner Irsay arrested for DWI, pills

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Colts owner Jim Irsay was jailed Monday on suspicion of intoxicated driving after police said he failed sobriety tests during a traffic stop and they found multiple prescription drugs inside his vehicle.

Irsay was stopped late Sunday after he was spotted driving slowly near his home in suburban Carmel, coming to a stop in the roadway and failing to use a turn signal. Police say the 54-year-old Irsay failed several roadside field sobriety tests before he was arrested, though details were not released.

Carmel police said the drugs found in Irsay's vehicle weren't associated with any prescription bottles found inside.

Irsay faces a preliminary misdemeanor charge of driving while intoxicated and four felony counts of possession of a controlled substance, Hamilton County Sheriff's Department Deputy Bryant Orem said.

If convicted on the felony charges, Irsay could face of six months to three years in prison on each count. So-called Schedule IV drugs such as those with which Irsay was allegedly caught include drugs such as Xanax, Darvocet and Ambien, with a low risk for abuse or dependency, according to the Drug Enforcement Agency.

Irsay was being held at the Hamilton County Jail under \$22,500 bond.

An NFL spokesman says he is subject to discipline. Myra Borshoff Cook, a spokeswoman for Irsay, declined to comment and Colts spokesman Avis Roper said the team was still gathering details.

Djokovic beats Federer to win Indian Wells title

INDIAN WELLS, California — Novak Djokovic beat Roger Federer 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (3) to win the BNP Paribas Open for the third time on Sunday.

Federer rallied from a break down and a 5-3 deficit in the third set to force the tiebreaker, but he made a slew of mistakes to lose the 33rd meeting between the longtime rivals.

Federer still leads the series 17-16, having beaten Djokovic in three sets in the semifinals at Dubai two weeks ago. Djokovic will remain No. 2 in the world, while Federer will rise three spots to No. 5 on Monday in the ATP Tour rankings.

Flavia Pennetta routed injured Agnieszka Radwanska 6-2, 6-1 to win the women's title, the biggest of her career.

A year ago, Pennetta was close to retiring from tennis.

The Italian veteran's ranking plunged to 166th in the world in June, and she had struggled to rebuild her career after having right wrist surgery the previous August.

Now she's glad she stuck around.

"After so many years, so much

work and everything, this is the moment I always waited for," she said. "And it's coming when you don't expect. It was something I was waiting since long time, and finally I have a good trophy in my hands."

Firearms expert tells of Pistorius' love of guns

PRETORIA, South Africa — Months before he killed his girlfriend, Oscar Pistorius said he drew his gun and went into "combat mode" after thinking he heard the noise of an intruder at his home, which turned out to be a washing machine, a South African guns expert testified Monday at the athlete's murder trial.

Sean Rens also said Pistorius

wanted to buy seven more guns in 2012 — to add to the 9 mm pistol he already owned for self-defense — and asked the firearm trainer to procure them for him under a gun collector's permit.

Rens also said he had many conversations about firearms with Pistorius, who is accused of murder in Steenkamp's shooting death on Valentine's Day last year. Rens said the double-amputee runner had "a great love and enthusiasm" for guns.

Pistorius said he killed Steenkamp by accident before dawn on Feb. 14, 2013, shooting her through a toilet door after mistaking her for an intruder in his home. Prosecutors say he killed her intentionally after an argument and also questioned Rens on

Pistorius' firearm training.

In later testimony Monday, police photographer Bennie van Staden spoke about the images he took when he arrived at Pistorius' house on the night of the killing. One photograph of the runner, taken in his garage, showed unexplained scuff marks on his bloodied prosthetic limbs.

Another from the Paralympian's bedroom showed a box with a label that said "Testis compositum."

The runner's representatives have identified the substance as an herbal remedy used for "muscle recovery." A product by that name also is sold as a sexual enhancer and contains the testicles, heart and embryo of pigs, among other ingredients. Some retailers also say it can be used to treat

fatigue.

Also found in the bedroom was a box with the label "Coenzyme compositum" as well as syringes and needles.

Collins signs for rest of season with Nets

NEW YORK — Jason Collins has been signed for the rest of the NBA season by the Brooklyn Nets.

The league's first openly gay player finished his second 10-day contract, which meant the Nets had to sign him for the remainder of the season if they wanted to keep him.

Collins is playing his 13th season in the league, including six previous seasons with the Nets.

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NHL



KETH SRANOCIC/AP

Pittsburgh Flyers forward Wayne Simmonds (17) celebrates in front of Pittsburgh Penguins defenseman Rob Scuderi (4) after scoring on goalie Marc-Andre Fleury, right, during the first period of Sunday's game in Pittsburgh. The Flyers won 4-3 to sweep a two-game home-and-home series.

Roundup

Flyers dump Penguins again

Simmonds scores twice as Philly sweeps home-and-home series

The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The Philadelphia Flyers used dominating special teams to sweep a weekend home-and-home series against the rival Pittsburgh Penguins.

Wayne Simmonds had two power-play goals in the first period, Matt Read had a short-handed tally and Philadelphia killed off all four Pittsburgh power plays in a 4-3 victory on Sunday.

It was the second victory in as many days for the surging Flyers against their cross-state rivals.

Philadelphia had a power-play goal, a short-handed goal and was a perfect 5-for-5 on the penalty kill in a 4-0 win against the Penguins at home on Saturday.

"The power play was good again, the penalty kill was good again," Flyers coach Craig Berube said. "Lots of shots, lots of chances. We played a pretty solid game."

Philadelphia improved to 5-1-1 in its past seven. Including playoffs, the Flyers are 10-2-1 all-time at Consol Energy Center.

"I know the boys in this locker room love playing against me," said Flyers goalie Steve Mason, who allowed three goals on 48 shots during the weekend sweep.

"Whether we're in their head or not, we don't really care. We get amped up to play against them."

Defensemen Brooks Orpik and Matt Niskanen and recent call-up Jayson Megna scored for the injury-riddled Penguins, who lost two straight in regulation for the first time since dropping three in a row from Nov. 6-13.

Simmonds assisted on Brayden Schenn's goal 2:06 into the game

President's Trophy race

	W	L	OT	Pts	Gms
St. Louis	46	14	7	99	15
Anaheim	45	16	7	97	14
San Jose	45	17	7	97	13
Boston	45	17	5	95	15
Colorado	44	19	5	93	14
Pittsburgh	44	19	4	92	15
Chicago	39	15	14	92	14

The Associated Press

and then scored twice in a 6:54 span to give the Flyers a three-goal lead 14 minutes in.

Read's goal was his third goal of the weekend for Philadelphia.

Canucks 4, Panthers 3 (SO): Nicklas Jensen scored in the first period and added the only goal in the shootout and visiting Vancouver earned a win over former goalie Roberto Luongo and Florida.

Alex Burrows had a goal and two assists and Dan Hamhuis also scored for the Canucks. Eddie Lack made 26 saves.

Jimmy Hayes scored two power-play goals for the Panthers. Vincent Trocheck also scored and Luongo stopped 29 shots.

Sharks 1, Rangers 0: Antti Niemi stopped 41 shots for the fourth shutout of the season and made Logan Couture's first-period, short-handed goal stand up as San Jose beat host New York for their sixth straight win.

Niemi and the Sharks defense were the difference in this one, unlike in the first meeting between the teams, won 9-2 by San Jose on Oct. 8. Niemi, who has 27 NHL shutouts, was particularly

strong during a Rangers power play early in the third.

Capitals 4, Maple Leafs 2: Troy Brouwer scored two goals and host Washington scored three times in the first period before holding on to beat Toronto.

Joel Ward had a goal and an assist, and Jason Chimera also tallied for Washington, which scored on three of its first five shots against James Reimer for a 3-0 lead.

The Maple Leafs pulled within 3-2 in the second period and it stayed that way until Brouwer's empty-netter with 4 seconds left.

Jets 7, Stars 2: Dustin Byfugien had two goals and an assist and Blake Wheeler added four assists as host Winnipeg cruised past Dallas.

The win pulled the Jets to within four points of the Stars for the final wild-card spot in the Western Conference, although Dallas has two games in hand.

Oilers 2, Hurricanes 1: Justin Schultz scored a power-play goal at 9:01 of the third period and visiting Edmonton earned a win over Carolina.

Avalanche 3, Senators 1: Semeny Varlamov made 38 saves and Andre Benoit, Nick Holden and John Mitchell scored for Colorado in a win over host Ottawa.

Canadiens 2, Sabres 0: Rookie Dustin Tokarski stopped 29 shots to earn his first NHL shutout in visiting Montreal's win over Buffalo. Brendan Gallagher and Dale Weise scored for the Canadiens.

Blackhawks 4, Red Wings 1: Marian Hossa celebrated his return to the lineup with a goal and two assists as host Chicago defeated Detroit to snap a two-game losing streak.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	67	45	17	5	95	215	146
Montreal	69	37	25	7	81	174	174
Toronto	69	36	25	8	80	203	211
Tampa Bay	67	36	24	7	79	194	175
Detroit	67	30	24	13	73	175	188
Ottawa	67	28	26	13	69	190	221
Florida	68	25	35	8	58	169	221
Buffalo	66	19	41	8	46	132	202

Metropolitan Division						
Pittsburgh	67	44	19	4	92	209 167
Philadelphia	67	35	25	7	77	192 193
Columbus	67	35	26	6	76	195 184
N.Y. Rangers	69	36	29	4	76	177 170
Washington	69	32	27	10	74	201 207
New Jersey	68	29	26	13	71	166 176
Carolina	68	29	30	9	67	169 194
N.Y. Islanders	68	26	34	9	61	152 223

Western Conference

	Central Division						
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
St. Louis	67	46	14	7	99	223	151
Colorado	68	44	19	5	93	209	181
Chicago	68	39	15	14	92	231	179
Minnesota	67	35	22	10	80	164	164
Dallas	67	32	24	11	75	193	192
Winnipeg	69	31	29	9	71	193	201
Nashville	68	29	29	10	68	164	201

Nashville	68	29	29	10	68	164	201
Pacific Division							
Anaheim	68	45	16	7	97	218	172
San Jose	69	45	17	7	97	214	165
Los Angeles	68	38	24	6	82	165	144
Phoenix	68	32	25	11	75	188	193
Vancouver	70	31	29	10	72	167	190
Calgary	68	27	34	7	61	165	202
Edmonton	69	24	36	9	57	171	224

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Saturday's Games
Columbus 3, Minnesota 1, SO
Pittsburgh 5, Carolina 1
Philadelphia 4, Toronto 3
Montreal 5, Ottawa 4, OT
Tampa Bay 3, New Jersey 0
N.Y. Islanders 4, Buffalo 1
St. Louis 4, Nashville 1
Phoenix 3, Calgary 1
Anaheim 2, Los Angeles 1

Sunday's Games
Vancouver 4, Florida 3, SO
Philadelphia 4, Pittsburgh 3
Washington 4, Toronto 1
Edmonton 2, Carolina 1
San Jose 1, N.Y. Rangers 0
Colorado 3, Ottawa 1
Montreal 2, Buffalo 0
Chicago 4, Detroit 1
Winnipeg 7, Dallas 2

Monday's Games
Minnesota at Boston
Vancouver at Tampa Bay
Winnipeg at St. Louis
Phoenix at Los Angeles

Tuesday's Games
Boston at New Jersey
Minnesota at N.Y. Islanders
Dallas at Pittsburgh
Carolina at Columbus
Ottawa at Montreal
N.Y. Rangers at Colorado
Toronto at Detroit
Chicago at Philadelphia
Buffalo at Calgary
Nashville at Edmonton
Washington at Anaheim
Florida at San Jose

Sharks 1, Rangers 0

San Jose 1, 0-0-1
N.Y. Rangers 0, 0-0-0
First Period—1, San Jose, Couture 19, 11:46 (sh).

Shots on Goal—San Jose 11-0-8-29 (10 of 41 saves). N.Y. Rangers, Lundqvist 25-0-0 (29-28).

A—18,006 (18,000). T—2:27.

Canadiens 2, Sabres 0

Montreal 2, 0-0-2
Buffalo 0, 0-0-0
First Period—1, Montreal, Weise (Gaichenyuk, Desharnais), 14:41, 2. Montreal, Gallagher 17 (Plekane, Emelin), 16:01.

Shots on Goal—Montreal 13-16-32. Buffalo 9-9-1-29.

Power-play opportunities—Montreal 0-3 of Buffalo 0-0 (29 shots-29 saves). Buffalo, Enright 4-17-5 (22 shots-28 saves).

A—19,070 (19,070). T—2:27.

Capitals 4, Maple Leafs 0

Toronto 0, 0-0-2
Washington 1, 1, 0-0-4
First Period—1, Washington, Brouwer 19 (Johnson), Backstrom 3:24 (pp), 2. Washington, Chimera 13 (Ward, Alzner), 10:07. Washington, Backstrom 14 (Kuznetsov), 8:44 (pp), 4. Toronto, Bode 16:01.

Second Period—5, Toronto, Paneuf 8 (Gunnarsson, Lipka), 8:05.

Third Period—6, Washington, Brouwer 20 (Alzner), 19:56 (en).

Shots on Goal—Toronto 2-0-7-29. Washington 14-6-13-33.

Power-play opportunities—Toronto 0 of 3; Washington 2-1.

Goals—Toronto, Reimer 11-9-1 (32 shots-38 saves). Montreal, Hlaak 27-11-4 (29-27).

A—18,506 (18,506). T—2:33.

Oilers 2, Hurricanes 1

Edmonton 1, 0-1-2
Carolina 1, 1-0-0
First Period—1, Edmonton, Hendricks 5 (Gordon, Schultz), 6:43, 2. Carolina, Jo Stahl 14 (E.S. Fauriol, Fauriol), 17:33.

Third Period—3, Edmonton, Schultz 9 (Perron, Hall), 19:31.

Shots on Goal—Edmonton 11-11-13, 33. Carolina 11-9-10-30.

Power-play opportunities—Edmonton 1 of 4; Carolina 0 of 3.

Goals—Edmonton, Scrivens 13-11-4 (30 shots-29 saves). Carolina, Khudobin 14-10-0 (33-31).

A—16,588 (16,680). T—2:22.

Flyers 4, Penguins 3

Philadelphia 3, 1-0-4
Pittsburgh 1, 2-0-3
First Period—1, Philadelphia, B.Schenn 17 (Simmonds, Lecavalier), 2:56, 2. Philadelphia, Simmonds 20 (Timonen, Giroux), 6:47 (pp), 3. Philadelphia, Simmonds 21 (Giroux, Voracek), 13:41 (pp), 4. Pittsburgh, Orpik 2 (Bortuzzo, Vitale), 17:33.

Second Period—5, Pittsburgh, Nicklas Jensen 10 (Scuderi, Jokinen), 5:50, 6. Philadelphia, Read 19 (L.Schenn), 12:11 (sh).

Shots on Goal—Philadelphia 15-9-19, 35. Pittsburgh 17-5-11-27.

Power-play opportunities—Philadelphia 2 of 5; Pittsburgh 0 of 4.

Goals—Philadelphia, Mason 28-16-6 (29 shots-20 saves). Pittsburgh, Fleury 15-12, Zatkoff 10-4-1 (13-41, 20-19).

A—18,647 (18,387). T—2:20.

Jets 7, Stars 2

Dallas 2, 0-0-2
Winnipeg 3, 2-2-7
First Period—1, Winnipeg, Trouba 21 (Wheeler), 3:11, 2. Dallas, Chiasson 12 (Nichushkin, Jämsen), 7:02, 4. Winnipeg, Forsberg 11 (Enstrom), 11:54, 5. Winnipeg, Enstrom 8 (Wheeler, Cormier), 17:02.

Second Period—5, Winnipeg, Jokinen 16 (Wheeler, Byfugien), 29, 7. Winnipeg, Byfugien 18 (Jokinen, Enstrom), 16:30 (sh).

Third Period—8, Winnipeg, Byfugien 19 (Wheeler, Jokinen), 5:14, 4. Winnipeg, Kane 16, 7:33.

Shots on Goal—Dallas 10-13-27, Winnipeg 16-8-10-34.

Power-play opportunities—Dallas 0 of 2; Winnipeg 1-1-1-3.

Goals—Dallas, Thomas 18-21-4 (17 shots-13 saves). Winnipeg, 0-2-29 second 17-14. Winnipeg, Montoya 11-5-5 (27-28).

A—15,004 (15,004). T—2:43.

Blackhawks 4, Red Wings 1

Detroit 0, 0-1-0
Chicago 0, 2-2-4
First Period—1, Chicago, Leddy 7 (Hossa, B.Smith), 8:44 (pp), 2. Detroit, Nyquist 17 (Alfredsson, Kronwall), 15:10 (sh), 3. Chicago, B.Smith 9 (Redden, Hossa), 19:46.

Second Period—3, Chicago, Hossa 22 (Sharp, Keith), 6:33, 5. Chicago, Toews 17 (Hossa), 17:45 (sh).

Shots on Goal—Detroit 5-7-8-20. Chicago 11-15-30.

Goals—Detroit, Howard 14-16-10 (30 shots-17 saves). Chicago, Crawford 28-12-10 (20-18).

A—22,128 (19,717). T—2:20.

Canucks 4, Panthers 3 (SO)

Vancouver won shootout 1-0
First Period—1, Florida, Hayes 8 (Gibbert, Hossa), 1:28 (sh), 2. Vancouver, Hamhuis 5 (Burrows, H.Sedlin), 7:42, 3. Vancouver, B.Smith 9 (Redden, Hossa), 18:30.

Second Period—4, Florida, Treche 2 (Howden), 4:19, 5. Vancouver, Burrows 3 (Edler, Bлекsa), 5:34 (pp), 6. Florida, Hayes 9 (Campbell, Pirri), 10:40.

Shootout—Vancouver 1 (Dalpe NG, James), 1. Florida 0 (Bjugstad NG, Boyes NG, Pirri NG).

Shots on Goal—Vancouver 11-17-22, Florida 15-13-20.

Power-play opportunities—Vancouver 1 of 3; Florida 0 of 2.

Goals—Vancouver, Lack 12-13-24 (29 shots-16 saves). Florida, Luongo 21-18-7 (32-29).

A—14,215 (17,040). T—2:47.

Avalanche 3, Senators 1

Colorado 0, 1-2-3
Ottawa 0, 1-1-1
First Period—1, Colorado, Redden 17 (Bordeneuve, Duchene), 15:49.

Second Period—1, Colorado, Redden 17 (McGrinn, Duchene), 3:10 (pp), 3. Colorado, Mitchell 9 (Landeskog, MacKinnon), 7:02, 4. Ottawa, Zibaneid 12 (E.Karlsson, Ryan), 19:54.

Shots on Goal—Colorado 4-8-10-22, Ottawa 4-10-15-39.

Power-play opportunities—Colorado 1 of 1; Ottawa 0 of 2.

Goals—Colorado, Varlamov 34-13-5 (39 shots-38 saves). Ottawa, Reimer 7-12-5 (22-29).

A—19,501 (19,153). T—2:26.

AUTO RACING

NASCAR Food City 500

Edwards awarded win in rain-soaked Bristol

By JENNA FRYER
The Associated Press

BRISTOL, Tenn. — If two rain delays totaling more than five hours wasn't enough, the waterlogged race at Bristol Motor Speedway had a battery fly out of a car and spread a toilet paper-looking substance all over the track.

And that wasn't even the strangest occurrence Sunday.

Moments before Carl Edwards closed in on what should have been the white flag lap, the caution lights were accidentally turned on from the flag stand. As NASCAR tried to figure out what was going on, the sky opened up and prevented the race from resuming.

Edwards was awarded the win under caution — a victory he was headed to before the mishap — and celebrated his third career win at Bristol with his trademark backflip on the slick concrete.

"Oh, man, I thought, 'This is stupid. I shouldn't do this ... It's awfully glossy. It might be slick,'" he said. "I didn't want to stick it perfectly and have my feet go that way and break my arm on the concrete. That would have been terrible. I was actually really nervous about that."

NASCAR vice president of competition Robin Pemberton said a person in the flag stand leaned on the manual override switch and that turned on the caution lights. Six seconds after the lights were turned on, the flag man waved the yellow flag.

Pemberton said that the flag man can wave the caution flag without a call from series of officials in the tower if they see a proper reason.

"We were scanning cars and spotters, and there's some of us in the tower that only heard it after the teams were talking about it because we were looking at other things around the racetrack," Pemberton said.



ANDRE TEAGUE, BRISTOL HERALD COURIER/AP

Driver Carl Edwards takes a victory lap with the checkered flag after winning the NASCAR Sprint Cup series Food City 500 on Sunday at Bristol Motor Speedway in Bristol. Edwards was awarded the win after the race was delayed by rain for more than five hours.

Said Edwards: "No harm, no foul, let's act like it just didn't happen."

The victory makes Edwards the fourth winner in four races this season and, under NASCAR's new rules, is supposed to get him into the 16-driver Chase for the Sprint Cup championship.

"Just to have a win this early, man, it is a huge relief," he said.

Five other things from waterlogged Bristol:

1 Bump-and-run: With Chase berths conceivably on the line with a win, Ricky Stenhouse Jr.

was salivating at a shot at teammate Edwards when the final caution came out at Bristol. But he knew if the race went green again, his only chance would be the old Bristol bump-and-run, which hasn't been used in years. It's a risky move to do to a teammate, but owner Jack Roush said he expected nothing less from Stenhouse. "When it comes time to really charge for the checkered flag, there are no team orders, there are no rules," Roush said. "I expect them to race one another as they expect to be raced, not only with one another, but with

everybody in the garage. I expect Ricky is as fierce a competitor as there is out there, and if his car has the speed in it and he can get to the car in front of him, particularly the short track, you'd bump-and-run and take the prize if you could. I'd be disappointed if he didn't have that in his mind."

2 Awesome Aric: Aric Almirola finished a career-best third — and Richard Petty Motorsports teammate Marcos Ambrose was fifth as four Ford drivers placed in the top-five — but Ambrose felt he could have gotten more. He

restarted second behind Carl Edwards with 70 laps to go and had one solid chance to take the lead. If he'd gotten past Edwards, he just might have grabbed his first career victory. "These races are so hard to win, and it was a great day for us," he said. "I'm not disappointed at all with third, but when you see it and you can taste it and it's that close, you wonder what could have went different."

3 Smoke rises: Tony Stewart salvaged what looked like an awful weekend with a season-best fourth-place finish. It came after he qualified 37th, needed two Saturday practice sessions with crew chief Chad Johnston to make significant improvements to the car and needed the entire race to work his way into the top-10. "It's a step in the right direction for sure. This is a big one. If you come out of this place with a top-five you've had a good day," he said.

4 Disappointed with the finish: Kyle Larson flirted with the lead and was in position to race for the win until the race-changing caution with 77 laps remaining. He went to pit road third, took four tires and restarted ninth. So even though he finished a career-best 10th, the rookie wasn't thrilled. "It's crazy to think it's kind of a disappointing finish for the way we ran for most of the race, but all in all it was a good race," Larson said.

5 Dale's bad day: Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s strong start to the season finally came to an end at Bristol, where he finished 24th after opening with a win and two second-place finishes. Although his Chevrolet wasn't great all weekend, his trouble Sunday was compounded by two left-front tire issues. Once he was out of contention, he was basically just making laps for the bulk of the race. It cost Earnhardt the points lead, which went to Brad Keselowski. Earnhardt now trails Keselowski by 10 points.



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NCAA TOURNAMENT

Mercer, Delaware end long absences

No. 14 Bears back for first time since 1985

By ERIC OLSON
The Associated Press

It's been a while since Delaware has been in the NCAA tournament, and longer yet since Massachusetts, Nebraska, Coastal Carolina and Mercer made it.

Welcome back, and to the 21st century for that matter, all you teams that haven't performed on college basketball's grandest stage since the 1980s or, in Mercer's case, the '90s.

With all due credit to first-timers Cal Poly and North Carolina Central, this is about those programs that once knew NCAA nirvana but haven't experienced it for a decade or two or three.

Consider Mercer. The last time the Bears (26-8) played in the tournament, in 1985, current coach Bob Hoffman was two years away from coaching a small-college women's team in Oklahoma, athletic director Jim Cole was 13 years old and Rollie Massimino was leading Villanova to one of the surprise national championships in tournament history.

The 14th-seeded Bears' game against Duke on Friday in Raleigh, N.C., has been three years in the making. They've won 77 games in that time, were the 2012

CollegeInsider.com tournament champions and came up just short in the Atlantic Sun tournament against a Florida Gulf Coast team that went to the Sweet 16. Mercer got payback against that "Dunk City" bunch in this year's conference title game.

Big South champion Coastal Carolina (21-12) is back for the first time since 1993. The 16th-seeded Chanticleers, who play Virginia in Raleigh on Friday, are led by a man who knows how to get to the NCAA's. Cliff Ellis, 68, previously coached tournament teams at Auburn, Clemson and South Alabama.

Nebraska (19-11) last appeared in 1998 under Danny Nee. That was three coaches ago. The Cornhuskers and second-year coach Tim Miles never expected to be in this position after being picked last in the Big Ten—they finished fourth—and starting conference play with four losses.

No one in Lincoln was complaining about the Huskers' No. 11 seed. They open Friday against Baylor in San Antonio.

"When they called our name," guard Terran Peteway said, "I didn't care who we were playing against. I was just happy to be in the tournament."



GAIL BURTON/AP

Delaware's Devon Saddler, left, tries to pass around William & Mary players during the CAA championship game. Delaware won 75-74 to reach the NCAA tournament for the first time since 1999.

Massachusetts (24-8) became a national power in the 1990s with John Calipari as coach and Marcus Camby as the headliner. The Minutemen played in the tournament seven consecutive years from 1992-98 and didn't return until now. They earned a No. 6 seed and a date Friday in Raleigh with the winner of the Iowa-Tennessee play-in game.

Delaware (25-9) is back for the first time since 1999, when Mike Brey was in charge. The No. 13-seeded Blue Hens won the Colonial Athletic Association tournament and will play Michi-

gan State on Thursday in Spokane, Wash.

There also are some familiar faces in new places.

Steve Alford, who starred on Indiana's 1987 championship team, has coached South Region No. 4 seed UCLA to the tournament in his first season in Westwood. He previously went to the tournament with New Mexico, Iowa and Missouri State.

Alford will square off Friday in San Diego against one of his contemporaries, Danny Manning. The leader of Kansas' 1988 championship team and a long-

time assistant with the Jayhawks, Manning is the second-year coach of a No. 13 Tulsa team that's in the tournament for the first time since 2003.

Mike Davis, who succeeded Bob Knight at Indiana in 2000 and coached the Hoosiers to the 2002 championship game against Maryland, is the second-year coach for Southwestern Athletic Conference tournament champion Texas Southern (19-14). Davis' team plays Cal Poly on Wednesday in Dayton, Ohio, in a meeting of Midwest co-No. 16 seeds.

Surprises still possible even without 'Dunk City'

By STEPHEN HAWKINS
The Associated Press

Mercer has already been to "Dunk City" on the way to its first NCAA tournament since 1985, grounding the darling team everyone got to know last March.

Florida Gulf Coast, which last year became the first No. 15 seed to make it to the Sweet Sixteen, isn't in this 68-team field after losing at home to Mercer in the Atlantic Sun Conference championship game.

So can those Bears (26-8) from Macon, Ga., duplicate what their Atlantic Sun rival did last year? Will another double-digit seed step up in all the madness this year?

Maybe it could be the team from deep in the heart of Texas with a 28-game winning streak. Or possibly some Fightin' Blue Hens, Chanticleers or Jaspers.

Mercer's five senior starters are at least getting a chance they felt was missed last March. The Bears drew a No. 14 seed in the loaded Midwest Regional and play Duke on Friday in Raleigh, N.C.

While watching FGCU's captivating NCAA run last year, after the Eagles won at Mercer for the Atlantic Sun title, all that went through Bears guard Langston Hall's mind was, "That could have been us."

Stephen F. Austin (31-2), the Southland Conference team from Nacogdoches, Texas, hasn't lost in nearly four months—only No. 1 Florida and No. 2 Wichita State have won more games. The Lumberjacks, a No. 12 seed facing VCU on Friday, were also through Bears guard Langston Hall's mind was, "That could have been us."



BOB LEVY/AP

Stephen F. Austin's Nikola Gajic, right, and Jacob Parker, left, try to stop Sam Houston State's James Thomas during the Southland Conference championship game. Parker, the conference player of the year, hopes he and the No. 12-seeded Lumberjacks will pull off some surprises in the NCAA tournament.

them out of the Big Dance then.

"It was definitely disappointing but it's definitely fueled our engines for this year."

We've been playing with a chip on our shoulder," said Jacob Parker, the floppy-haired junior forward who was the Southland Conference Player of the Year. "We always say one team, one dream. And coach's big motto is dream big."

Ivy league champion Harvard (26-4) is in its third consecutive NCAA tournament after a 66-year drought, and is a No. 12 seed against Cincinnati. The Crimson got their first NCAA tourney win last year as a No. 14 seed, upsetting New Mexico 68-62.

But Harvard's lone victory last March was overshadowed by that No. 15 seed from "Dunk City."

One of the No. 15 seeds this season is Eastern Kentucky (24-9), an OVC team that is among the national leaders for made three-pointers (9.2 per game) and steals (8.8). The Colonels' first NCAA tournament game since 2007 is Friday against Big 12 regular-season champion Kansas (24-9).

The other 15s are Patriot champion American playing Wisconsin; Southern Conference winner Wofford taking on Michigan, a Final Four team last year; and Horizon champ Milwaukee against Villanova.

MAAC champ Manhattan (25-7) got in the field for the first time since 2004, when as a No. 12 seed the Jaspers won a first-round game against Florida. They also won as a No. 13 seed against Oklahoma in the 1995 tourney. This time, they are a No. 13 again and take on defending national champion Louisville in the Midwest.

North Dakota State has won three consecutive FCS national football championships, but the Bison (25-6) are in the NCAA basketball tournament for only the second time — a No. 12 seed facing Oklahoma (23-9) of the Big 12. The Summit League champion Bison are the nation's best shooting team, making 51 percent of their field goals this season, and also are one of only 13 teams with less than 10 turnovers a game.

The Blue Hens from Delaware (25-9) won the Colonial Athletic Association championship game on a late field goal by 6-foot-9 forward Carl Baptiste, who finished with a career-best 24 points. Devon Saddler, the Blue Hens career scoring leader, convinced his coach to go inside to Baptiste instead of having him take a final shot like everyone else expected before Delaware's first NCAA berth since 1999.

Big South tournament champion Coastal Carolina (21-12) is in the NCAA tournament for the first time since 1993, which was two years after they became the first Big South team to make the field.

Seventh-year Chanticleers coach Cliff Ellis previously took South Alabama, Clemson and Auburn to the NCAA tournament. But his last trip was 11 years ago when Auburn made it to the NCAA Sweet Sixteen for the second time in five years.

Ellis had been hopeful of maybe getting in one of the games in Dayton to start the tournament. The Chanticleers are instead a No. 16 taking on Virginia on Friday.



NCAA TOURNAMENT

MIDWEST REGIONAL

First glance

By any measure, this region is as tough as it gets.

If you want to judge it by experience, the Midwest features three of the Final Four teams from a year ago (Louisville, Wichita State and Michigan). If you want to judge it by stars, the Midwest features headliners Jabari Parker and Russ Smith. If you want to judge it by coaching, the Midwest features Mike Krzyzewski, Rick Pitino and John Calipari.

Wichita State (34-0) is the only undefeated team standing, and despite the Shockers' experience and winning moxie, they will have to knock off giant after giant just to make it to the Final Four.

By the numbers

26 Combined Final Four appearances by head coaches in this region (including Calipari's two vacated ones)

7 Combined national titles won by Krzyzewski, Pitino and Calipari

9.7 Kentucky's rebounding margin, which ranks second in the nation

Contenders

Michigan: The No. 2 seed Wolverines are, as usual, one of the nation's most efficient offensive teams. They're only so-so defensively, and they're a terrible rebounding team without injured big man Mitch McGary, but there's plenty of talent and firepower on this team.

Duke: The Blue Devils have a superstar in Parker, and some good complementary

pieces such as Rodney Hood and Quinn Cook. If wiry sophomore forward Amile Jefferson can be a factor inside, Duke will be difficult to beat.

Louisville: The Cardinals have won 12 of their last 13 games, and they're starting to resemble last season's title team.

Sleepers

Kentucky: The Wildcats had 10 losses, but they're also one of the most talented teams in the nation. Calipari has advanced at least to the Sweet 16 with his last seven NCAA tournament teams.

St. Louis: The Billikens entered the tournament with four losses in their last five games, but they won 19 in a row before that. If they can recover, they're capable of pulling off an upset or two.

Headed for a fall?

Wichita State: They can play with any team in the country, and their 34-0 record speaks for itself, as does their Final Four appearance from last season. But the road back to a Final Four could feature games against Kentucky, Louisville and Michigan or Duke.

Star power

Parker, the Duke superstar freshman, isn't just a likely first-team All-American; he could be the No. 1 overall pick in June's NBA draft.

And then there's Louisville's Smith, who is vying for the third Final Four of his career. Smith, who scored 42 points against



MARK HUMPHREY/AP

Louisville guard Russ Smith, who scored 42 points against Houston in the conference tournament on Friday, might be the most explosive player in the tournament.

Houston last week, is among the most explosive offensive weapons in the nation.

Cagiest coach

Let's go with Pitino, who is always good and has been on a roll of late. Factoring in conference tournament and NCAA tournament games, the Cardinals have won 12 straight postseason games, including the 2013 national title, and 20 of their past 21. Pitino is pursuing a rare third straight Final Four appearance, and the Cardinals are currently playing their best basketball.

Best players you might not have heard of

Cleanthony Early, Wichita State: Wichita State's best player (15.8 ppg, 5.9 rpg) still isn't a household name, but the versatile 6-8 forward should be. He averaged 16.2 ppg during the Shockers' Final Four run last season.

Marcus Foster, Kansas State: The Kansas State freshman is an impressive long-range shooter who makes 40.4 percent of his three-pointers and averages 15.6 ppg.

George Beamon, Manhattan: Manhattan's hard-nosed 6-4 swingman has fought through injuries to lead his team in scoring (19.2 ppg) and rebounding (6.6 rpg), and he's also the Jaspers' best defender.

And the winner is

Louisville: It will take a battle-tested team to win such a rugged region, and the Cardinals have the experience, the championship core and defensive mindset needed to survive a series of epic matchups.

— Jerry Brewer, The Seattle Times

Team capsules By The Philadelphia Inquirer

1 WICHITA STATE
Record: 34-0, 18-0 Missouri Valley, 1st. RPI: 4.
Coach: Gregg Marshall (16th season, 520-367 overall; 173-70 in seven seasons at Wichita State; 5-9 NCAA).

Best win: 70-65 at St. Louis, Dec. 1.
Worst loss: None.
Top three: Cleanthony Early (15.8 ppg, 5.9 rpg, 0.8 bpg), Fred VanVleet (12.1 ppg, 5.3 apg, 44.7 third-percentile), Ron Baker (13.1 ppg, 3.6 rpg, 3.1 apg).
The skinny: The Shockers made a surprise run to the Final Four as a ninth seed a season ago before falling to Louisville. Another run to the national semis would surprise no one this time around.

2 MICHIGAN
Record: 25-8, 15-3 Big Ten, 1st. RPI: 9.
Coach: John Beilein (22nd season, 440-268; 145-92 in seven seasons at Michigan; 13-8 NCAA).

Best win: 77-70 vs. Wisconsin, Jan. 18.
Worst loss: 63-61 vs. Charlotte, Nov. 24.
Top three: Nik Stauskas (17.5 ppg, 3.3 apg), Carsi LeVert (13.3 ppg, 4.5 rpg), Glenn Robinson III (10.3 ppg, 4.3 rpg).

The skinny: The national runner-up proved to be the class of its conference by the end of the regular season. The Wolverines led the league in field percentage (47.6) but were last in opponent field-goal percentage (44.5).

3 DUKE
Record: 26-8, 13-5 Atlantic Coast, tied 3rd. RPI: 7.
Coach: Mike Krzyzewski (39th season, 983-305; 910-246 in 34 seasons at Duke; 82-25 NCAA).

Best win: 75-60 vs. Syracuse, Feb. 22.
Worst loss: 72-59 vs. Clemson, Jan. 10.
Top three: Jabari Parker (19.2 ppg, 8.8 rpg), Rodney Hood (16.5 ppg, 3.9 rpg), Quinn Cook (11.5 ppg, 4.3 apg).

The skinny: Parker, though only a freshman, is one of the best players in the country. Friends School product Amile Jefferson is playing 22.4 minutes per game but is shooting 65.2 percent from the floor.

4 LOUISVILLE
Record: 29-5, 15-3 American Athletic, tied 1st. RPI: 18.
Coach: Rick Pitino (28th season, 691-240; 332-116 in 13 seasons at Louisville; 48-16 NCAA).

Best win: 58-57 vs. Cincinnati, Feb. 22.
Worst loss: 73-67 vs. Memphis, Jan. 9.
Top three: Russ Smith (18.3 ppg, 4.7 apg), Monteziel Harrell (14.2 ppg, 8.2 rpg), Luke Hancock (11.7 ppg, 3.1 apg).

The skinny: Louisville's four seniors, led by Smith, comprise the Cardinals' winnigest class ever (119 victories). The Cards, the defending national champions, outscored opponents by 21.1 points per game.

5 ST. LOUIS
Record: 26-6, 13-3 Atlantic 10, 1st. RPI: 26.
Coach: John Danowski (20th season, 407-362; 54-13 in two seasons at St. Louis; 2-5 NCAA).

Best win: 64-62 vs. VCU, Feb. 15.
Worst loss: 71-64 vs. Duquesne, Feb. 27.
Top three: Dwayne Evans (14.0 ppg, 6.4 rpg, 1.3 apg), Jordair Jett (13.7 ppg, 4.8 apg, 4.0 rpg), Rob Loe (9.9 ppg, 5.4 rpg, 2.0 apg).

The skinny: The Billikens slumped late, losing four of their final five games. This is an inconsistent effort, but it was the A-10's top performer last, allowing 61.2 ppg.

6 MASSACHUSETTS
Record: 24-6, 10-6 Atlantic 10, tied 5th. RPI: 23.
Coach: Derek Kellogg (6th season, 109-85, all at Massachusetts; 0-0 NCAA).

Best win: 80-75 vs. Virginia Commonwealth, Dec. 21.
Worst loss: 91-80 vs. George Mason, Feb. 12.
Top three: Chaz Williams (15.8 ppg, 7.0 apg, 1.6 spg), Cady Lalanne (11.4 ppg, 8.0 rpg, 2.2 bpg), Sampson Carter (10.5 ppg, 4.9 rpg).

The skinny: The Minutemen had some solid nonleague wins over BYU, Nebraska, and Providence. Everything works off Williams, among the quickest players in the A-10.

7 TEXAS
Record: 23-10, 11-7 Big 12, tied 3rd. RPI: 35.
Coach: Rick Barnes (27th season, 583-299; 381-165 in 16 seasons at Texas; 20-20 NCAA).

Best win: 81-69 vs. Kansas, Feb. 1.
Worst loss: 89-53 at Texas Tech, March 8.
Top three: Jonathan Holmes (13.0 ppg, 7.2 ppg), Isaiah Taylor (12.5 ppg, 3.9 apg, 3.1 rpg), Cameron Ridley (11.2 ppg, 8.1 rpg, 2.2 bpg).

The skinny: The Longhorns did enough in the Big 12 tournament to earn an NCAA bid after dropping four of their last six regular-season games, including the loss to Texas Tech. Texas has not played the first NCAA weekend since 2008.

8 KENTUCKY
Record: 24-10, 12-6 Southwestern, tied 2nd. RPI: 17.
Record: 24-10, 12-6 Southwestern, tied 2nd. RPI: 17.
Coach: John Calipari (22nd season, 592-176; 147-36 in five seasons at Kentucky; 82-25 NCAA).

Best win: 72-66 vs. Louisville, Dec. 28.
Worst loss: 72-67 at South Carolina, March 1.
Top three: Julius Randle (15.0 ppg, 10.5 rpg), James Young (14.5 ppg, 4.1 rpg), Andrew Harrison (10.8 ppg, 3.8 apg, 3.1 rpg).

The skinny: Calipari is again following the one-and-done plan, which led to a national title in 2012: The team's top four scorers are freshmen. Kentucky lost three of its last four regular-season games before reaching the SEC final.

9 KANSAS STATE
Record: 20-12, 10-8 Big 12, 5th. RPI: 51.
Coach: Bruce Weber (16th season, 360-175; 47-20 in two seasons at Kansas State; 11-9 NCAA).

Best win: 85-82 vs. Kansas, Feb. 10.
Worst loss: 60-58 vs. Northern Colorado, Nov. 8.
Top three: Marcus Foster (15.6 ppg, 3.2 rpg, 2.5 apg), Thomas Gipson (11.8 ppg, 6.5 rpg, 5.6 field-goal percentage), Shane Southwell (9.8 ppg, 4.4 rpg, 2.8 apg).

The skinny: The Wildcats had the best scoring defense (65.7 ppg.) in the Big 12, but they were eighth in scoring offense (69.7). They also held opponents to a league-low 29.4 percent from long distance.

10 ARIZONA STATE
Record: 21-11, 10-8 Pac-12, tied 3rd. RPI: 44.
Coach: Herb Sendek (21st season, 395-278; 141-120 in eight seasons at Arizona State; 7-7 NCAA).

Best win: 69-66 vs. Arizona, Feb. 14.
Worst loss: 78-76 at Oregon State, March 8.
Top three: Jahi Carson (18.6 ppg, 4.5 apg), Jermaine Marshall (15.0 ppg), Jordan Badczynski (11.1 ppg, 8.3 rpg).

The skinny: The Sun Devils are in the top 30 in the nation in both three-pointers made and three-point percentage. They are also 10th in Division I in defensive rebounds, which speaks to their strong half-court defense.

11 IOWA/TENNESSEE
Record: 20-12, 9-9 Big Ten, 6th. RPI: 57.
Best win: 85-82 vs. Iowa State, Dec. 13.
Worst loss: 67-62 vs. Northwestern, March 13.

TENNESSEE
Record: 21-12, 11-7 Southeastern, 4th. RPI: 42.
Best win: 87-52 vs. Virginia, Dec. 30.
Worst loss: 57-56 vs. Texas A&M, Jan. 11.

12 NORTH CAROLINA STATE/XAVIER
NORTH CAROLINA STATE
Record: 21-12, 11-7 Atlantic Coast, tied 7th. RPI: 55.
Best win: 74-67 vs. Pittsburgh, March 3.

Worst loss: 82-72, overtime, vs. North Carolina Central, Nov. 10.
XAVIER
Record: 21-12, 10-8 Big East, tied 3rd. RPI: 47.
Best win: 75-69 vs. Creighton, March 1.
Worst loss: 84-78 vs. Southern California, Nov. 30.

13 MANHATTAN
Record: 25-7, 15-5 Metro Atlantic Athletic, 2nd. RPI: 60.
Coach: Steve Masiello (3rd season, 60-38, all at Manhattan; 0-0 NCAA).

Best win: 71-68 vs. Iona, March 10.
Worst loss: 71-67 at Fairfield, Jan. 18.
Top three: George Beamon (19.2 ppg, 6.6 rpg, 1.6 spg), Michael Alvarado (12.0 ppg, 4.0 apg, 1.4 spg), Rhame Brown (10.1 ppg, 6.0 rpg, 3.7 bpg).

The skinny: Behind Beamon, who ranked third in the MAC in scoring, the Jaspers are in the NCAA tournament for the first time since 2004 thanks to their upset of top-seeded Iona in the title game.

14 MERCER
Record: 26-8, 14-4 Atlantic Sun, tied 1st. RPI: 83.
Coach: Bob Hoffman (11th season, 193-158; 125-81 in six seasons at Mercer; 0-0 NCAA).

Best win: 79-76 at Mississippi, Dec. 22.
Worst loss: 79-75 vs. N. Florida, Feb. 27.
Top three: Langston Hall (14.7 ppg, 5.6 apg, 3.1 rpg), Daniel Coursy (9.9 ppg, 6.6 rpg, 2.1 bpg), Bud Thomas (9.1 ppg, 4.1 rpg).

The skinny: Mercer is in the tournament for the first time since 1985. The Bears knocked off Florida Gulf Coast, one of last year's NCAA tournament South title game.

15 WOFFORD
Record: 20-12, 11-5 Southern, tied 3rd. RPI: 153.
Coach: Mike Young (12th season, 189-184, all at Wofford; 0-0 NCAA).

Best win: 63-59 at Elon, Feb. 27.
Worst loss: 71-57 vs. Chattanooga, Jan. 18.
Top three: Karl Cochran (15.7 ppg, 5.0 rpg, 3.0 apg), Lee Slater (11.2 ppg, 8.6 rpg), Spencer Collins (12.8 ppg, 3.1 rpg).

The skinny: Wofford was dangerous in 2010 and 2011, losing to Wisconsin by four and Brigham Young by eight as a 13 seed and 14 seed, respectively. The Southern champions are back, but with only one senior, Aerris Smith, who averages only 8.8 minutes a game.

16 CAL POLY/TEXAS SOUTHERN
POLY/TEXAS SOUTHERN
Record: 19-13, 12-6 Southwest Athletic, 3rd. RPI: 239.
Best win: 67-64 at Southern, March 8.
Worst loss: 75-73 vs. Jackson State, Feb. 17.

CAL POLY
Record: 13-19, 6-10 Big West, tied 6th. RPI: 208.
Coach: Joe Calipari (5th season, 76-82, all at Cal Poly; 0-0 NCAA).

Best win: 72-64 at Santa Barbara, Jan. 30.
Worst loss: 62-58 vs. Cal Davis, Jan. 30.

NCAA TOURNAMENT

WEST REGIONAL

First glance

Top-seeded Arizona could be tested in a lot of different ways in the West, with some grudging defensive styles as well as some high-octane offenses in the vein of the UCLA squad that brought down the Wildcats on Saturday.

The Gonzaga-Oklahoma State survivor would make a some intrigue with Arizona. Oke State is underseeded and averages 80.3 points a game, 22 more than Arizona allows. If the Zags advance, they offer the fifth-best shooting percentage in the country (49.8) and it would call to mind the two programs' double-overturn, second-round NCAA matchup in 2003.

Fourth-seeded San Diego State allows the second-fewest points in the nation (56.6), and if the Aztecs and Wildcats each get through to the second weekend, it would be a rematch of Arizona's 69-60 win four months ago in San Diego.

By the numbers

1 In the region of superlatives, Arizona tops stats men Ken Pomeroy's defensive ratings at 86.9 points per 100 possessions and Wisconsin makes the nation's fewest turnovers (8.2 a game).

5 Creighton's Doug McDermott is No. 5 on the all-time scoring list with 3,105 points.

125 The difference between Oklahoma State's turnovers committed and forced, a positive figure that's 13th nationally.

Team capsules By The Philadelphia Inquirer



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

Creighton's Doug McDermott will attempt to lead the No. 3-seeded Bluejays deep into the NCAA tournament.

Contenders

Arizona: Defense travels, and Arizona has it in spades, pressuring the ball, helping, hedging and swarming passing lanes. The Cats also rebound proficiently and they have the Pac-12 player of the year in guard Nick Johnson.

5 OKLAHOMA
Record: 23-9, 12-6 Big 12, 2nd. RPI: 27.
Coach: Ken Kruger (28th season, 537-341; 126-48 in six seasons at Oklahoma; 1-4 NCAA).
Best win: 87-62 vs. Iowa State, Jan. 11.
Worst loss: 68-60 vs. Texas Tech, Feb. 8.

The skinny: The Sooners have used the same starting five all season - three sophomores, a freshman, and a senior. Oklahoma led the Big 12 and was 18th nationally in made three-pointers (8.5 per game).

6 BAYLOR
Record: 24-11, 9-9 Big 12, tied 6th. RPI: 30.
Coach: Scott Drew (12th season, 224-160; 204-149 in 11 seasons at Baylor; 6-3 NCAA).
Best win: 74-61 vs. Iowa State, March 4.
Worst loss: 82-72 vs. Texas Tech, Jan. 15.

The skinny: Cory Jefferson (13.5 ppg., 8.4 rpg.), Kenny Chery (11.6 ppg., 6.2 rpg.), Isaiah Austin (11.0 ppg., 5.5 rpg., 3.3 bpg.).

7 OREGON
Record: 23-9, 10-8 Pac-12, tied 3rd. RPI: 28.
Coach: Dana Altman (25th season, 506-289; 96-46 in four seasons at Oregon; 4-9 NCAA).
Best win: 64-57 vs. Arizona, March 8.
Worst loss: 80-72 at Oregon State, Jan. 19.

The skinny: Austin, a 7-foot-1 sophomore, is seventh in the country in blocks per game, anchoring the Big 12's second-best scoring defense (8.4 ppg.). The Bears recovered from a 2-8 start to the conference season.

8 GONZAGA
Record: 26-6, 15-3 West Coast, 1st. RPI: 19.
Coach: Mark Few (15th season, 402-99, all at Gonzaga; 15-14 NCAA).
Best win: 75-64 vs. BYU, March 13.
Worst loss: 82-73 at Portland, Jan. 9.

The skinny: The Ducks are second in the Pac-12 in scoring offense at 81.8 points a game and are sixth in the nation in free-throw percentage. Although they give up 74.0 points a game, they force 7.9 steals a game and guard the perimeter pretty well.

9 SAN DIEGO STATE
Record: 28-6, 15-3 Mountain West, 1st. RPI: 15.
Coach: Steve Fisher (23rd season, 495-256; 310-175 in 15 seasons at San Diego State; 23-12 NCAA).
Best win: 81-57 vs. Kansas, Jan. 9.
Worst loss: 68-62 vs. Wyoming, Feb. 11.

The skinny: The Aztecs rode their defense to a successful season. They are second nationally in scoring defense (56.6 points per game), fourth in three-point defense (28.7 percent), and eighth in field-goal defense (38.4).

10 ARIZONA
Record: 30-4, 15-3 Pac-12, 1st. RPI: 1.
Coach: Sean Miller (11th season, 246-94; 126-48 in six seasons at Arizona; 11-6 NCAA).
Best win: 77-72 vs. Duke, Nov. 29.
Worst loss: 60-58 vs. California, Feb. 1.

The skinny: Nick Johnson (16.2 ppg.), Aaron Gordon (12.1 ppg.), Brandon Ashley (11.5 ppg., 5.8 rpg.).
The skinny: The Wildcats, who spent eight weeks at No. 1 in the AP poll, give up just 58.1 ppg., sixth in the nation. Johnson is the Pac-12 player of the year. Rondae Hollis-Jefferson, from Chester, averages 8.6 points and 5.8 rebounds.

11 ARIZONA STATE
Record: 26-7, 12-6 Big Ten, tied 2nd. RPI: 6.
Coach: Bo Ryan (15th season, 347-147; 317-120 in 13 seasons at Wisconsin; 16-12 NCAA).
Best win: 79-74 at Iowa, Feb. 22.
Worst loss: 65-56 vs. Northwestern, Jan. 29.

The skinny: The Badgers finished the season strong with Kaminsky and Jackson forming a nice inside-out tandem. They get their offense from a lot of contributors: The top five scorers average between 16.2 and 22.9 ppg.

12 WISCONSIN
Record: 26-7, 14-4 Big East, 2nd. RPI: 10.
Coach: Greg McDermott (20th season, 386-223; 295-37 in four seasons at Creighton; 2-5 NCAA).
Best win: 101-80 vs. Villanova, Feb. 9.
Worst loss: 70-65 vs. St. John's, Feb. 9.

The skinny: Doug McDermott (16.9 ppg., 7.0 rpg.), Ethan Wragge (10.5 ppg., 4.0 rpg.), Austin Chabon (7.7 ppg., 4.5 apg.).
The skinny: Behind Doug McDermott, a lock for national player of the year, the Big Red led the nation in three-point percentage and assist-turnover ratio, and were second in three-pointers made and assists.

13 NEW MEXICO STATE
Record: 20-12, 13-5 Patriot League, 2nd. RPI: 118.
Coach: Mike Brennan (1st season, 20-12).
Best win: 55-36 at Boston University, March 8.
Worst loss: 63-60 vs. Colgate, Feb. 8.

The skinny: Assistant rebounded from a 10-20 season in 2012-13 to win its first Patriot League crown since 2009, under first-year coach Brennan. After losing five out of eight, American won its last three games.

16 WEBER STATE
Record: 19-11, 14-6 Big Sky, 1st. RPI: 150.
Coach: Randy Rake (8th season, 169-86, all at Weber State; 0-1 NCAA).
Best win: 68-63 vs. Montana, Jan. 25.
Worst loss: 78-75 at Idaho State, Feb. 17.

The skinny: The Wildcats lost four of their final seven regular-season games before regrouping and capturing the Big Sky tournament.

Wisconsin: Under Bo Ryan, the Badgers don't beat themselves. They're second nationally in fewest fouls and they hit .747 on free throws.

Sleepers

Oregon: The Ducks have gunned up 635 threes and in an often frantic pace, they've averaged 81.8 points. Their lack of inside muscle probably is fatal, but they hung with Arizona on the road and beat the Wildcats in Eugene.

Creighton: As a No. 3 seed, the Blue Jays wouldn't be a shock if they make a run. And any team with the consensus best player in McDermott shouldn't be taken lightly. The Jays must make threes, and at 427 nationally, they're No. 1.

Headed for a fall?

Baylor: Bears were solid in 2013-14, somewhat shedding a mercurial image. But they get a Nebraska team that is seeking its first NCAA win.

Star power

Oke State's Marcus Smart is one of the most highly scrutinized players of the season, mainly for shoving a Texas Tech fan Feb. 8 and drawing a three-game suspension. His tournament play will impact the discussion on whether foregoing the NBA last spring was a wise decision.

Let's recognize San Diego State point guard Xavier Thames, the transfer from Washington State who averages 16.9 points.

9 OKLAHOMA STATE
Record: 21-12, 8-10 Big 12, 8th. RPI: 45.
Coach: Travis Ford (14th season, 248-159; 126-76 in six seasons at Oklahoma State; 0-2 NCAA).
Best win: 72-65 vs. Kansas, March 1.
Worst loss: 65-61 at Texas Tech, Feb. 8.

The skinny: Marcus Smart (17.8 ppg., 5.7 rpg., 4.7 apg., 2.8 spg.), Markel Brown (17.1 ppg., 5.3 rpg.), Le'Bryan Nash (14.2 ppg., 5.7 rpg.).
The skinny: The Cowboys survived a seven-game skid in February to earn a bid. Almost all of Smart's numbers improved this year, but his draft stock has fallen because of the team's record and his three-game suspension for shoving a fan last month.

10 BRIGHAM YOUNG
Record: 23-11, 13-5 West Coast, 2nd. RPI: 31.
Coach: Dave Rose (9th season, 209-66, all at Brigham Young; 15-14 NCAA).
Best win: 86-82 vs. Texas, Nov. 25.
Worst loss: 87-76 at Loyola Marymount, Dec. 28.

The skinny: Tyler Haws (23.4 ppg.), Kyle Collinsworth (14.0 ppg., 8.1 rpg.), Matt Carlino (13.7 rpg.).
The skinny: If you like scoring, win or lose, this is your squad. BYU averages 85 points, third in the nation, first in this time frame. Either the Cougars or their opponent broke 100 points six times, (in two games, both teams did it).

11 NEBRASKA
Record: 19-12, 11-7 Big Ten, 4th. RPI: 48.
Coach: Tim Miles (7th season, 105-118; 34-20 in two seasons at Nebraska; 0-1 NCAA).
Best win: 77-68 vs. Wisconsin, March 9.
Worst loss: 87-74 vs. Alabama-Birmingham, Nov. 22.

The skinny: Terran Pettway (18.1 ppg., 4.9 rpg., 1.6 apg.), Sharon Shields (12.7 ppg., 5.8 rpg., 1.4 apg.), Walter Pitchford (9.5 ppg., 4.7 rpg.).
The skinny: After knocking off No. 12 Wisconsin to end the regular season, fourth-seeded Nebraska lost to Ohio State in the Big Ten quarterfinals. The Cornhuskers start four underclassmen.

12 NORTH DAKOTA STATE
Record: 25-6, 12-2 Summit, 1st. RPI: 34.
Coach: Sam Phillips (6th season, 117-70, all at North Dakota State; 0-1 NCAA).
Best win: 85-66 vs. Delaware, Dec. 16.
Worst loss: 95-77 at North Dakota, Nov. 24.

The skinny: The Bison are riding high into their first NCAA tournament appearance since 2009. They've won 14 of their last 15 games, outscoring their opponents by an average of 14.1 points in those victories.

13 NEW MEXICO STATE
Record: 26-9, 12-4 Western Athletic, 2nd. RPI: 73.
Coach: Marvin Menzies (7th season, 158-85, all at New Mexico State; 0-3 NCAA).
Best win: 67-61 at New Mexico, Dec. 17.
Worst loss: 86-81 at Chicago State, Jan. 16.

The skinny: Tshildel Nephew (11.1 ppg., 7.8 rpg., 3.5 apg.), Tshildel Nephew (11.1 ppg., 7.8 rpg., 3.5 apg.).
The skinny: Bhullar, a Canadian whose 7-foot-3 brother, Tanner, is also on the Aggies - stands 7-5 and lines up beside the 6-foot-10 South African Nephew, giving the Aggies one of the nation's tallest frontcourts.

14 LOUISIANA-LAFAYETTE
Record: 23-11, 17-7 Sun Belt, 3rd. RPI: 98.
Coach: Bob Marlin (16th season, 290-193; 65-62 in four seasons at Louisiana-Lafayette; 0-2 NCAA).
Best win: 82-81, overtime, vs. Georgia State, March 16.
Worst loss: 73-70 vs. Jackson State, Dec. 19.

The skinny: The Ragin' Cajuns rallied from a nine-point deficit late in regulation in Sunday's Sun Belt final, then shocked top-seeded Georgia State in overtime to reach their first NCAA tournament since 2005.

15 AMERICAN
Record: 20-12, 13-5 Patriot League, 2nd. RPI: 118.
Coach: Mike Brennan (1st season, 20-12).
Best win: 55-36 at Boston University, March 8.
Worst loss: 63-60 vs. Colgate, Feb. 8.

The skinny: Assistant rebounded from a 10-20 season in 2012-13 to win its first Patriot League crown since 2009, under first-year coach Brennan. After losing five out of eight, American won its last three games.

16 WEBER STATE
Record: 19-11, 14-6 Big Sky, 1st. RPI: 150.
Coach: Randy Rake (8th season, 169-86, all at Weber State; 0-1 NCAA).
Best win: 68-63 vs. Montana, Jan. 25.
Worst loss: 78-75 at Idaho State, Feb. 17.

The skinny: The Wildcats lost four of their final seven regular-season games before regrouping and capturing the Big Sky tournament.

His departure is a primary reason WSU coach Ken Bone's future is doubtful.

Cagiest coach

In his fifth season, Arizona's Sean Miller has the Wildcats perking despite the mid-season loss of forward Brandon Ashley.

Best players you might not have heard of

Ryan Spangler, Oklahoma: Spokane fans know the hustling Oklahoma forward well. He transferred from Gonzaga after the 2012 season, and averages 9.4 rebounds.

Taylor Braun, North Dakota State: The 6-7 forward is a career 42-percent three-point shooter who could be a problem for Oklahoma.

Sim Bhullar, New Mexico State: Which-ever San Diego State defender gets him, he'll know he's a load. Bhullar, of Indian heritage by way of Toronto, is 7-5 and weighs 350 pounds.

And the winner is

Wisconsin: Badgers have tended to be a bit erratic this year, but they're offensively skilled (fifth nationally by KenPom.com) and efficient enough to get Ryan his first Final Four appearance.

— Bud Withers, The Seattle Times

NCAA TOURNAMENT

EAST REGIONAL

First glance

No surprise to see Tony Bennett getting No. 1 seed Virginia rolling after what he accomplished as coach at Washington State. Still, the Cavaliers have little margin for error as they average just 65.9 points per game.

Michigan State, the No. 4 seed, will undoubtedly be the region pick in many brackets. It's hard to get a handle on Iowa State, which won its first games 14 games, then became mediocre until getting hot again this past week. North Carolina and Connecticut will get a lot more attention than typical No. 6 and No. 7 seeds, and it would be foolish to underestimate 12th-seeded Harvard, in its third straight tournament under Tommy Amaker.

By the numbers

1 Virginia's NCAA rank in scoring defense, following 55.3 points per game.

17 Number of NCAA tournaments in a row that Michigan State has competed in.

294 Virginia's national rank in scoring offense at 65.9 points per game.

2,018 Career points for Cincinnati's Sean Kilpatrick.

Contenders

Virginia: The Cavaliers impose their methodical style with great success. If you like run-and-gank basketball, stay away from the TV when they play. The Cavaliers



Bob Levmore/AP

Virginia's Joe Harris was the MVP of the ACC tournament and was a third-team all-conference.

may be more vulnerable than a typical No. 1 seed, but it still would not be a surprise to see them have a nice run.

Iowa State: The Cyclones rank sixth in the country in scoring (82.9 points) and first in assists (18.5).

Team capsules By The Philadelphia Inquirer

1. VIRGINIA
Record: 28-6, 16-2 Atlantic Coast, 1st. RPI: 11.
Coach: Tony Bennett (8th season, 173-92; 104-59 in five seasons at Virginia, 3-3 NCAA).
Best win: 75-56 vs. Syracuse, March 1.
Top three: Malcolm Brogdon (12.3 pp., 5.6 rpg.), Joe Harris (11.6 pp., 4.1 rpg.), and Mitchell (7.0 pp., 5.9 rpg.).
The skinny: Virginia brings a feisty defense to the tournament. The Cavaliers limited 16 of their opponents to less than 40 percent shooting. The regular-season ACC title was their first since 1981 and the tourney title their first since 1976.

2. VILLANOVA
Record: 28-4, 16-2 Big East, 1st. RPI: 5.
Coach: Jay Wright (20th season; 407-232; 285-148 in 13 seasons at Villanova; 12-10 NCAA).
Best win: 63-59 vs. Kansas, Nov. 29.
Worst loss: 64-63 vs. Seton Hall, March 13.
Top three: James Bell (14.5 pp., 6.1 rpg.), Darun Hilliard (14.3 pp., 4.3 rpg.), JayVaughn Pinkston (14.2 pp., 6.1 rpg.).
The skinny: The Wildcats shot the ball well from the field (45.2 percent) and from three-point range. Their defense improved late in the season; they allowed an average of 57.4 points in their last five regular-season games.

3. IOWA STATE
Record: 26-7, 11-7 Big 12, tied 3rd. RPI: 8.
Coach: Fred Hoiberg (4th season, 88-46, all at Iowa State; 2-2 NCAA).
Best win: 77-70 vs. Michigan, Nov. 17.
Worst loss: 102-77 at West Virginia, Feb. 10.
Top three: Melvin Ejim (18.1 pp., 8.5 rpg.), DeAndre Kane (17.0 pp., 6.7 rpg.), Georges Niang (16.5 pp., 4.4 rpg., 3.6 apg.).

The skinny: The Cyclones are making their third-straight NCAA appearance. They have won their first game each of the last two years, and Ejim, a senior who is the second-leading scorer in the Big 12, was a contributor each time.

4. MICHIGAN STATE
Record: 26-8, 12-6 Big Ten, tied 2nd. RPI: 22.
Coach: Tom Izzo (9th season, 465-186, all at Michigan State; 39-15 NCAA).
Best win: 78-74 vs. Kentucky, Nov. 12.
Worst loss: 64-60 vs. Georgetown, Feb. 1.
Top three: Gary Harris (17.1 pp., 4.2 rpg.), Adreian Payne (15.8 pp., 7.4 rpg.), Keith Appling (12.3 pp., 4.6 rpg.).
The skinny: Harris has started to round into shape lately. He's the one Spartan who can consistently make things happen after the offense end in a pinch. Payne is tough inside for the Big Ten tournament champs.

5. CINCINNATI
Record: 27-6, 15-3 American Athletic, tied 1st. RPI: 20.
Coach: Mick Cronin (10th season, 231-130; 162-106 in eight seasons at Cincinnati, 3-5 NCAA).
Best win: 69-66 vs. Louisville, Jan. 30.
Worst loss: 64-47 vs. Xavier, Dec. 14.
Top three: Sean Kilpatrick (20.7 pp., 2.6 apg.), Justin Jackson (11.1 pp., 7.2 rpg.), Titus Rubles (7.3 pp., 6.7 rpg., 2.0 apg.).
The skinny: Kilpatrick has been lights-out all season long. He's the type of player who can get hot and potentially lead the Bearcats, 5-4 in their last nine games, on a deep run in the tournament.

6. NORTH CAROLINA
Record: 23-9, 13-5 Atlantic Coast, tied 3rd. RPI: 25.
Coach: Roy Williams (26th season, 723-189; 305-88 in 11 seasons at North Carolina; 62-21 NCAA).
Best win: 74-66 vs. Duke, Feb. 10.
Worst loss: 83-80 vs. Belmont, Nov. 17.
Top three: Marcus Paige (17.4 pp., 4.3 apg.), James Michael McAdoo (14.2 pp., 6.7 rpg.), Leslie McDonald (10.3 pp.).
The skinny: Carolina found an impressive rhythm at the end of the regular season behind the sharp play of sophomore guard Paige. The Tar Heels won 12 in a row before a loss at Duke and an ACC tournament loss to Pittsburgh.

7. CONNECTICUT
Record: 26-8, 12-6 American Athletic, tied 3rd. RPI: 21.
Coach: Kevin Ollie (2nd season, 46-18, all at Connecticut; 0-0 NCAA).
Best win: 65-64 vs. Florida, Dec. 31.
Worst loss: 55-77 at Houston, Dec. 31.
Top three: Shabazz Napier (17.4 pp., 5.9 rpg.), DeAndre Daniels (12.5 pp., 5.8 rpg.), Ryan Boatright (11.8 pp.).
The skinny: The Huskies have at times shown an over-reliance on the three-point shot. Napier, the conference's player of the year and a USBWA first-team All-American, looks to set the tone for Connecticut.

8. MEMPHIS
Record: 23-9, 12-6 American Athletic, tied 3rd. RPI: 36.
Coach: Josh Pastner (5th season, 129-43, all at Memphis; 1-3 NCAA).
Best win: 72-66 vs. Louisville, March 1.
Worst loss: 77-68 vs. Houston, Feb. 27.
Top three: Joe Jackson (14.3 pp., 4.6 apg., 3.6 rpg.), Michael Dixon Jr. (11.8 pp.), Shaq Goodwin (11.8 pp., 6.5 rpg., 58.4 field-goal percentage).
The skinny: The Tigers have struggled from the free-throw line all season, something that could hurt them this season. Austin Hines finished second in the American in field-goal percentage (59.2).

Michigan State: Coach Tom Izzo has had a few first-round flameouts in his career, but he also has six Final Four appearances.

Connecticut: Senior Shabazz Napier is one of the best all-around players in the country and having a senior leader is a huge asset.

Sleepers

Providence: The Friars are playing in their first tournament since 2004 but they have a lot of momentum after winning the Big East title, including a great performance in the title game against Creighton.

Harvard: Since when did this become a sports school? The Crimson pulled off a shocker last year when it beat No. 3 seed New Mexico. It will surprise few if Harvard beats No. 5 seed Cincinnati this week.

Headed for a fall?

Villanova: The Wildcats were in the hunt for a No. 1 seed, and they had a great year. But it's hard to be confident with a team that lost by 28 points at home to Creighton, then by 21 in the rematch.

Star power

Napier, Connecticut's 6-foot-1 senior guard, averages 17.1 points and 4.9 assists, but here's the caper: he leads the team in rebounding despite his diminutive size at 5.9 a game.

Providence's Bryce Cotton is another everything 6-1 senior guard. He averages

21.4 points, 5.8 assists and 3.5 rebounds.

Kilpatrick, a 6-4 senior guard for Cincinnati, averages 20.7 points a game, which is 9.6 more than the next highest Bearcat and 14.4 more than the team's third-leading scorer.

Cagiest coach

Izzo and North Carolina's Roy Williams have won national titles and what Amaker is doing at Harvard is amazing. But the winner is Virginia's Bennett. He has proved his style of play can work against the sport's blue bloods.

Best players you might not have heard of

Joe Harris, Virginia: A 6-6 senior guard from Chelan, Harris was a first-team All-ACC player last year and was named a third-team all-conference pick this year.

DeAndre Kane, Iowa State: A 6-4 senior guard for Iowa State, Kane averaged 17.0 points, 6.7 rebounds and 5.8 assists.

And the winner is

Michigan State: In a region that seems wide open, you can't go wrong siding with Spartans coach Tom Izzo, whose teams often overachieve in March.

— Scott Hanson, The Seattle Times

9. GEORGE WASHINGTON
Record: 24-8, 11-5 Atlantic 10, tied 3rd. RPI: 29.
Coach: Mike Lonergan (21st season, 424-202; 47-46 in seven seasons at George Washington, 12-5 NCAA).
Best win: 60-53 vs. Creighton, Dec. 1.
Worst loss: 76-60 vs. Marquette, Nov. 29.
Top three: Maurice Clarke (14.3 pp., 3.4 rpg., 1.8 apg.), Isaiah Armwood (12.5 pp., 8.5 rpg., 1.6 rpg.), Patricio Garino (12.2 pp., 4.3 rpg., 56.4 field-goal percentage).
The skinny: The Colonials have won more games this season than they had in the previous two years combined (23). Armwood began his career at Villanova and averaged the most rebounds in A-10 games (8.8).

10. ST. JOSEPH'S
Record: 24-9, 11-5 Atlantic 10, tied 3rd. RPI: 37.
Coach: Phil Martelli (19th season, 362-246, all at St. Joseph's; 7-5 NCAA).
Best win: 69-62 vs. VCU, Feb. 8.
Worst loss: 77-69 at Temple, Dec. 4.
Top three: Langston Galloway (17.4 pp., 4.3 rpg., 1.5 apg.), Ronald Roberts Jr. (14.4 pp., 7.2 rpg., 1.3 bpg.), Hall Kanavakis (10.7 pp., 8.7 rpg., 4.4 apg.).
The skinny: The Hawks slid at the end of the regular season but won three straight to win the A-10 tournament. Galloway was a first-team All-A-10 choice, while Kanavakis made the second team and Roberts the third team.

11. PROVIDENCE
Record: 23-11, 10-8 Big East, tied 3rd. RPI: 40.
Coach: Ed Cooley (8th season, 149-112; 57-53 in three seasons at Providence; 0-0 NCAA).
Best win: 68-65 vs. Creighton, March 15.
Worst loss: 81-80 vs. Seton Hall, Dec. 31.
Top three: Bryce Cotton (21.4 pp., 5.8 apg.), LaDontae Henton (13.9 pp., 7.8 rpg.), Kadeem Batts (12.4 pp., 7.6 rpg.).
The skinny: Cotton, who averages 39 minutes per game, is the Big East's best player not named Doug McDermott. They made a surprising run to the Big East tourney title despite injuries and a pair of player dismissals.

12. HARVARD
Record: 26-4, 13-1 Ivy, 1st. RPI: 46.
Coach: Tommy Amaker (17th season, 314-209; 138-70 in seven seasons at Harvard; 3-5 NCAA).
Best win: 76-64 vs. Green Bay, Nov. 29.
Worst loss: 68-53 at Florida A1, Jan. 21.
Top three: Wesley Saunders (14.0 pp., 3.9 apg., 1.7 rpg.), Steve Moudros-Misilo (10.5 pp., 5.8 rpg., 54.4 field-goal percentage), Syran Chambers (11.1 pp., 4.7 apg.).
The skinny: The first team to travel a ticket to the NCAA tournament, Ivy League champion Harvard has won 12 of its last 13 games. Last year, the Crimson upset No. 3 New Mexico in the tournament as a 14 seed.

13. DELAWARE
Record: 25-9, 14-2 Colonial Athletic, 1st. RPI: 65.
Coach: Monty Ross (8th season, 115-140, all at Delaware; 0-0 NCAA).
Best win: 83-76 vs. Towson, Jan. 25.
Worst loss: 95-93 vs. Charleston southern, Nov. 10.
Top three: Devon Saddler (19.7 pp., 4.3 rpg., 3.6 apg.), Davon Usher (19.4 pp., 6.1 rpg.), Jarvis Threatt (18.1 pp., 5.8 rpg., 5.6 apg.).
The skinny: The Blue Hens claimed their first NCAA bid since 1959 behind the high-scoring trio of Saddler, Usher, and Threatt. Their 13-game winning streak from Jan. 1 to Feb. 12 was the second-longest in school history.

14. NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL
Record: 28-5, 15-1 Mid-Eastern Athletic, 1st. RPI: 99.
Coach: LeVelle Moten (4th season, 82-44, all at North Carolina Central; 0-0 NCAA).
Best win: 82-72, overtime, at North Carolina State, Nov. 20.
Worst loss: 71-65 at IUPUI, Dec. 7.
Top three: Jeremy Ingram (20.6 pp., 3.8 rpg.), Emanuel Chapman (6.8 pp., 6.0 apg.), Jordan Parks (10.2 pp., 5.6 rpg., 66.2 field-goal percentage).
The skinny: Only three seasons after moving up to Division I, North Carolina Central has won 20 in a row to make its way to the tournament for the first time.

15. MILWAUKEE
Record: 21-13, 7-9 Horizon, 5th. RPI: 131.
Coach: Bob Jeter (9th season, 150-140, all at Milwaukee; 1-1 NCAA).
Best win: 73-63 at Green Bay, Feb. 8.
Worst loss: 80-58 vs. Illinois-Chicago, Feb. 25.
Top three: Jordan Aaron (14.9 pp., 3.0 rpg., 2.5 apg.), Kyle Klein (12.4 pp., 5.1 rpg.), Matt Titty (12.3 pp., 6.6 rpg.).
The skinny: The streaky Panthers haven't been to the tournament since 2006. Over its last 15 games, Milwaukee lost three in a row, then three straight, lost four straight, and eventually won five straight to end the year.

16. COASTAL CAROLINA
Record: 21-12, 11-5 Big South, 1st, southern Division. RPI: 193.
Coach: Cliff Ellis (36th season, 670-425; 134-87 in seven seasons at Coastal Carolina; 6-8 NCAA).
Best win: 75-61 vs. Winthrop, March 9.
Worst loss: 70-58 at Charleston Southern, Jan. 8.
Top three: Elijah White (16.1 pp., 4.1 rpg.), Warren Gillis (14.8 pp., 3.5 rpg., 3.2 apg.), Josh Cameron (14.1 pp., 2.6 rpg., 2.5 apg.).
The skinny: This is Coastal Carolina's first NCAA trip since 1993. Willis had 22 points in the title win over Winthrop. Ellis is the 10th coach in NCAA Division I history to lead four teams to the tournament.

NCAA TOURNAMENT

SOUTH REGIONAL

First glance

Welcome to the bracket of heavy hitters. The South region is loaded with teams thought to be favorites to win it all at different times this year: Kansas, Syracuse, Florida. The Gators have been the steady-gest group all year, but perhaps no team has the upside of the Jayhawks. If the chips fall correctly, this one could produce some heavyweight fights with UCLA and Ohio State in the mix.

By the numbers

1 Danny Manning's first trip to the tournament at Tulsa. The former Kansas star who led the Jayhawks to the 1988 NCAA title, Manning has turned around Tulsa in just his second year.

10 Colorado's scoring offense ranking in the Pac 12. Without star player Spencer Dinwiddie, the Buffaloes struggled mightily to score the ball. It remains their Achilles' heel.

6 The number of teams from the Atlantic 10 that made the field this year and also where Dayton finished in the conference standings. The A-10 has become a force in basketball, and the Flyers are representative of that this year.

Contenders

Florida: The Gators are the rare combination of talent and veteran savvy that college basketball doesn't produce that often anymore. No team has been more consistent this season.

Team capsules

By The Philadelphia Inquirer

Kansas: The Jayhawks can win it all-if freshman phenom center Joel Embiid returns healthy. Embiid will almost undoubtedly miss the tournament's first weekend, but if he returns healthy after that, Kansas has as much firepower as any team in the country.

Sleepers

VCU: The Rams get the nod here solely for their frenetic style of play. Their full-court pressure defense is called "Havoc," and it can shipwreck teams not accustomed to it.

New Mexico: The Lobos have flown under the radar all season long, but buoyed by a dramatic takedown of San Diego State in the Mountain West title game Saturday night, are peaking at the right time.

Headed for a fall?

Ohio State: The Buckeyes have scrapped toward a respectable finish in the Big Ten, but without the explosive scorer they've boasted in recent seasons, are ripe for an early exit.

Star power

Andrew Wiggins had an up and down start to his season with Kansas, but he's been more aggressive down the stretch and has looked like the star so many people hyped him to be.

Another freshman, Tyler Ennis, has been the catalyst for Syracuse this season and has been clutch all year: He helped the



BOB LEVERONE/AP

Pittsburgh senior Lamar Patterson (21) will undoubtedly look to leave his mark on the tournament in his last dance on the big stage.

Orange knock off Duke and hit a half-court shot to beat Pittsburgh.

Gagiest coach

His ejection against Duke aside, Jim Boeheim has guided Syracuse masterfully this season and has a team capable of making a deep push. Long criticized for not winning a title, Boeheim is now a towering presence in the tourney.

Best players you might not have heard of

Lamar Patterson, Pitt: Patterson has kept the Panthers in games all season, a rangy lefty whose range extends well outside the arc. Expect the senior to enjoy his last dance on the big stage.

Shayne Whittington, Western Michigan: Whittington is averaging nearly a double-double for the MAC champs. The curly Bronco has suffered through four long years of missed chances before that recent breakthrough.

Zach LaVine, UCLA: OK, so you've probably heard of LaVine, who starred at Bothell High last year, but he's still a small secret nationally. He slumped late in the season, but has the potential to explode and is as athletic as they come.

And the winner is

Kansas: The Jayhawks are susceptible on defense and have been inconsistent, but they have two top-five NBA picks and a good enough supporting cast to stack up with anyone. Andrew Wiggins is playing his best basketball of the year.

— Jayson Jenks, The Seattle Times

1 FLORIDA
Record: 32-2, 18-0 Southeastern, first RPI: 2.

Coach: Billy Donovan (20th season, 482-188, 447-168 in 18 seasons at Florida; 31-11 NCAA).

Best win: 67-61 vs. Kansas, Dec. 10.

Worst loss: 65-64 at Connecticut, Dec. 2.

The skinny: Casey Prather (14.3 ppg, 5.0 rpg, 61.7 field-goal percentage), Scottie Wilkbin (13.0 ppg, 3.7 apg), Patric Young (11.0 ppg, 6.2 rpg, 54.8 field-goal percentage).

The skinny: A win away from last year's Final Four, the Gators haven't lost since Dec. 2. Florida is the first team to finish an 18-game SEC season with a perfect record. Three of the top four scorers are seniors.

2 KANSAS
Record: 24-9, 14-4 Big 12, 1st RPI: 3.

Coach: Bill Self (21st season, 531-173; 324-68 in 11 seasons at Kansas; 35-14 NCAA).

Best win: 94-83 vs. Duke, Nov. 12.

Worst loss: 92-86 at West Virginia, March 8.

Top three: Andrew Wiggins (17.4 ppg, 6.0 rpg), Joel Embiid (11.2 ppg, 8.1 rpg, 2.6 apg), Perry Ellis (13.6 ppg, 6.5 rpg).

The skinny: Wiggins, part of the ballpooned potential NBA draft class, is the Big 12 freshman of the year. Embiid is the conference's defensive player of the year, but a back injury has kept him on the sideline since March 1.

3 SYRACUSE
Record: 27-5, 14-4 Atlantic Coast, 2nd RPI: 16.

Coach: Jim Boeheim (38th season, 947-319, all at Syracuse; 52-29 NCAA).

Best win: 79-68 vs. Villanova, Dec. 18.

Worst loss: 62-59, overtime, vs. Boston College, Feb. 5.

Top three: C.J. Fair (16.7 ppg, 6.2 rpg), Trevor Cooney (12.2 ppg), Tyler Ennis (12.7 ppg, 5.6 apg, 3.4 rpg).

The skinny: The Buffaloes are in the NCAAAs for the third time in their 10 seasons. The Buffaloes are in the NCAAAs for the third time in their 10 seasons. The Buffaloes are in the NCAAAs for the third time in their 10 seasons.

5 VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH
Record: 26-8, 12-4 Atlantic 10, 2nd RPI: 12.

Coach: Shaka Smart (5th season, 137-42, all at Pittsburgh; 11-9 NCAA).

Best win: 55-65 at Virginia, Nov. 12.

Worst loss: 50-57 vs. Florida State, Nov. 21.

Top three: Trevean Graham (15.7 ppg, 6.9 rpg), Juverte Reddic (12.0 ppg, 8.5 rpg), Briante Weber (9.6 ppg, 3.8 apg, 3.5 rpg).

The skinny: During the regular season, VCU led the A-10 in scoring margin (10.0 ppg). Weber was named the A-10 defensive player of the year. Opponents shot just 29.9 percent from three-point range against the Rams.

6 OHIO STATE
Record: 25-9, 10-8 Big Ten, 5th RPI: 24.

Coach: Thad Matta (14th season, 377-113; 275-82 in 10 seasons at Ohio State; 23-11 NCAA).

Best win: 59-58 at Wisconsin, Feb. 1.

Worst loss: 71-70, overtime, vs. Penn State, Jan. 29.

Top three: LaQuinton Ross (15.4 ppg, 6.1 rpg), Lenzelle Smith Jr. (11.1 ppg, 5.1 rpg), Aaron Craft (9.6 ppg, 4.7 apg).

The skinny: The Buckeyes will try to force teams to run with their host of athletes. Ross is one of the best players in the conference. Ohio State is in the NCAAAs despite a four-game skid and two bad losses to Penn State.

7 COLORADO
Record: 27-5, 13-3 Mountain West, 2nd RPI: 13.

Coach: Craig Neal (1st season, 27-6).

Best win: 63-54 vs. Cincinnati, Dec. 7.

Worst loss: 76-73 vs. UNLV, Jan. 15.

Top three: Cameron Bairstow (20.3 ppg, 7.4 rpg), Kendall Williams (16.4 ppg, 4.9 apg), Alex Kirk (13.6 ppg, 8.7 rpg, 2.7 apg).

The skinny: The Lobos make their name on the defensive end of the court. They held each of their last six regular-season opponents to less than 60 points and their 38.9 field-goal percentage defense was 10th in the nation.

8 IDAHO
Record: 23-11, 10-8 Pac-12, 2nd RPI: 33.

Coach: Bayle Bithen (8th season, 148-115; 92-49 in four seasons at Colorado; 4-9 NCAA).

Best win: 100-91 vs. Oregon, Jan. 5.

Worst loss: 71-54 at Washington, Jan. 12.

Top three: Spencer Dinwiddie (14.0 ppg), Josh Scott (14.1 ppg, 8.5 rpg), Asika Booker (14.0 ppg).

The skinny: The Buffaloes are in the NCAAAs for the third time in their 10 seasons. The Buffaloes are in the NCAAAs for the third time in their 10 seasons.

9 PITTSBURGH
Record: 25-9, 11-7 Atlantic Coast, 5th RPI: 39.

Coach: Jamie Dixon (11th season, 287-95, all at Pittsburgh; 11-9 NCAA).

Best win: 88-67 vs. Stanford, Nov. 26.

Worst loss: 71-66 vs. Florida State, Feb. 23.

Top three: Lamar Patterson (17.6 ppg, 4.3 apg), Talib Zanna (12.9 ppg, 8.8 rpg), Cameron Wright (10.6 ppg).

The skinny: The Panthers were hard to gauge during the regular season, failing to score any significant wins against ranked opponents and racking up nonconference wins against an unimpressive schedule.

10 STANFORD
Record: 21-12, 10-8 Pac-12, 3rd RPI: 41.

Coach: Johnny Dawkins (sixth season, 115-86, all at Stanford; 0-0 NCAA).

Best win: 82-80 at Oregon, Jan. 12.

Worst loss: 112-103 vs. Brigham Young, Nov. 11.

Top three: Chasson Randle (18.7 ppg), Dwight Powell (14.2 ppg, 6.9 rpg), Josh Huestis (11.4 ppg, 8.3 rpg).

The skinny: The loss listed above isn't because it was to BYU, it was for giving up 112 points to anybody on your home court. But with wins at Connecticut and Oregon and UCLA, the Cardinal showed it was NCAA-worthy.

Record: 23-10, 10-6 Atlantic 10, 5th RPI: 43.

Coach: Archie Miller (3rd season, 60-37, all at Dayton; 0-0 NCAA).

Best win: 72-67 at St. Louis, March 5.

Worst loss: 88-76 at Rhode Island, Jan. 25.

Top three: Jordan Sibert (12.5 ppg, 2.2 rpg, 1.5 apg), Devin Oliver (12.1 ppg, 7.5 rpg, 2.4 apg), Dwyane Pierre (11.1 ppg, 5.6 rpg).

The skinny: This is a team without stars but with solid depth: Eight players average 13 or more minutes. Oliver earned third-team all-Atlantic 10 honors. The Flyers put themselves in good position by winning their final three regular-season games over St. Louis, and Richmond.

12 STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
Record: 31-2, 18-0 Southland, 1st RPI: 52.

Coach: Brad Underwood (first season, 31-2).

Best win: 79-69 vs. Towson, Dec. 6.

Worst loss: 68-58 at East Tennessee State, Nov. 23.

Top three: Jacob Parker (14.2 ppg, 7.1 rpg, 2.0 apg), Desmond Haymon (14.3 ppg, 3.7 rpg, 2.8 apg), Thomas Walup (12.9 ppg, 5.0 rpg, 5.6 field-goal percentage).

The skinny: Before being hired this season at the tiny school in East Texas, Underwood's previous head coaching jobs had been at the junior-college level. The Lumberjacks closed out his first season on a 28-game winning streak.

13 TULSA
Record: 21-12, 13-3 Conference USA, tied 1st RPI: 74.

Coach: Danny Manning (2nd season, 38-28, all at Tulsa; 0-0 NCAA).

Best win: 75-71 vs. Southern Mississippi, Jan. 12.

Worst loss: 74-68 vs. Oral Roberts, Nov. 10.

Top three: James Woodard (15.7 ppg, 5.8 rpg, 1.8 apg), Rashad Smith (12.1 ppg, 4.9 rpg, 54.9 field-goal percentage), Shaquille Harrison (9.8 ppg, 3.2 apg, 3.9 rpg).

The skinny: Manning, the hero of Kansas' 1988 title team, has the Golden Hurricane in the NCAAAs for the first time since 2003. They have won their last 11 games.

14 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Record: 23-9, 14-4 Mid-American West, tied 1st RPI: 66.

Coach: Steve Hawkins (11th season, 204-154, all at Western Michigan; 0-1 NCAA).

Best win: 70-64 vs. New Mexico State, Nov. 9.

Worst loss: 69-64 vs. Bowling Green, Jan. 19.

Top three: David Brown (19.4 ppg, 3.6 rpg, 1.4 apg), Shayne Whittington (16.3 ppg, 9.1 rpg, 1.6 apg), Connor Tate (12.0 ppg, 5.8 rpg, 60.4 field-goal percentage).

The skinny: Western Michigan won 12 of its last 13 and claimed the MAC tourney title. The Broncos are in the NCAA tournament for the first time since 2004.

15 EASTERN KENTUCKY
Record: 24-9, 15-5 Ohio Valley East, 2nd RPI: 96.

Coach: Jeff Neuseau (8th season, 167-121, all at Eastern Kentucky; 0-1 NCAA).

Best win: 79-73 vs. Belmont, March 8.

Worst loss: 85-79 at Southern Illinois-Edwardsville, Jan. 4.

Top three: Glenn Coles (11.8 ppg, 4.2 apg, 42.5 field-goal percentage), Corey Walden (14.1 ppg, 4.2 rpg), Eric Stutz (8.4 ppg, 4.7 rpg, 65.6 field-goal percentage).

The skinny: The Colonels upset Belmont to win their first Ohio Valley championship since 2007, the last time they made the big dance. Eastern Kentucky has won seven straight.

16 ALBANY/MOUNT ST. MARY'S
ALBANY
Record: 18-14, 9-7 America East, 4th RPI: 185.

Coach: Ben: 67-58 vs. Vermont, March 9.

Worst loss: 60-56 at New Hampshire, Jan. 23.

Top three: Glenn Coles (11.8 ppg, 4.2 apg, 42.5 field-goal percentage), Corey Walden (14.1 ppg, 4.2 rpg), Eric Stutz (8.4 ppg, 4.7 rpg, 65.6 field-goal percentage).

The skinny: The Colonels upset Belmont to win their first Ohio Valley championship since 2007, the last time they made the big dance. Eastern Kentucky has won seven straight.

MOUNT ST. MARY'S
Record: 16-16, 9-7 Northeast, 5th RPI: 189.

Coach: Ben: 88-71 at Robert Morris, March 11.

Worst loss: 72-65 vs. Sacred Heart, Feb. 27.

SPORTS



Super soaker

Edwards picks up win in waterlogged Bristol | Page 25

NCAA TOURNAMENT

Close calls

Some teams disappointed by low seeds

BY EDDIE PELLIS
The Associated Press

In the eyes of today's NCAA selection committee, a game is a game, no matter whether it's played in November, January or March.

That's why some of the teams playing best heading into the NCAA tournament have crooked numbers by their names instead of 1s and 2s.

Louisville, Michigan State and UCLA, winners of the American Athletic, Big Ten and Pac-12 Conference tournaments, all received 4 seeds in what turned out to be the biggest — but not the only — head scratchers from Selection Sunday.

SEE SEEDS ON PAGE 27



AP photos

While Virginia head coach Tony Bennett, top, and the Cavaliers were rewarded with a No. 1 seed after defeating Duke for the championship of the Atlantic Coast Conference tournament, many conference tournament winners seemed to get little bump from their triumphs. Tom Izzo, bottom left, coached his Michigan State team to a Big Ten championship, but the Spartans were given only a No. 4 seed. Similarly, UCLA's Tony Parker, second from left, and Louisville coach Rick Pitino, second from right, saw their teams saddled with No. 4 seeds after winning their conference tournaments. Jabari Parker, right, and Duke were given the No. 3 seed in a loaded Midwest region that includes three of last season's Final Four teams.

More March Madness coverage inside:

■ Regional previews, Pages 28-31 ■ Bracket, Page 27 ■ Teams end dancing drought, Page 26

